The

COMMONWEAL

A Weekly Review of Literature the Arts and Public Affairs

FOUNDED BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

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The War Aims of the Nations

VERY LITTLE is being said by the belligerents about their war aims. What does Germany consider protection from the West and freedom in her own sphere? The British thesis of "freeing Europe from the threat of Hitlerism" is somewhat vague for a distant viewer's taste. What do the British and French and Polish governments mean by the term "Hitlerism," and by what kind of peace settlement do they believe it can be scotched? The history of the demand for war aims is not altogether encouraging. President Wilson asked for them several times during the last great war, but the settlements which followed that war did not prove a hopeful answer to the question. Neutral countries not only have the right to ask the warring nations about their ends; they have the duty to ask themselves what they also would want to follow the war. This is especially so for this country, if we really intend to keep out of the war and preserve our strength and objective viewpoint to counterbalance or cooperate with some of the other nations—Russia, perhaps; Italy or Japan—which will be powerful at the next settlement, and the battling nations themselves. Approaching the problem, several notions might fruitfully be kept in mind. Nothing in the world is plainer than that "Hitlerism," however you define it, cannot be eliminated from the world by paragraphs in a peace treaty. Furthermore, nothing seems clearer upon consideration of man and history, than that there will always be struggle between groups as well as individuals. No peace treaty will stop that. How struggle expresses itself is another question. Law, government and morality have not been altogether sterile in the work of civilizing the constant struggle between individuals and smaller groups. The battle for civilization has to progress or it will be lost in an appalling chaos. The struggles between the great economic classes and the struggles between nations must be civilized if the settlement after this war is going to be a peace settlement.

Too Early Or Too Late?

The Unlimited Claim to Relief

IN A WAY, this really is a grand country. Between September 20 and September 27, thirty new organizations registered with the Secretary of State in order to be able legally to solicit and collect "contributions to be used for medical aid and assistance and for the supplying of food and clothing to relieve human suffering in the countries now at war." Twenty-four of them are organized for Polish relief, most of them local in scope, many of them based on Polish parishes, most of them fostered apparently by Polish-Americans. Too late to be included in the last release of the Department of State, a general, national group has been organized—the Commission for Polish Relief—analogous to the Belgian relief of the last war. Americans can claim no defense against the demands in charity, and even justice, in behalf of war sufferers. And these new, overwhelming claims must not put from our minds and hearts those that were pressing before this recent war broke out. China is still there, the most numerous nation of all, and still the most needy of all. The wounds of the Spanish war have by no means healed: the people in all Spain, the Basques, the exiles, the refugees, all need our help. And what about the people of Germany? None of these thirty new agencies plans to furnish relief to war-torn Germany. Harassed as this rich and relatively safe country is by foreign demands, it must yet face the demands of charity for the people of Germany. This country would quickly strip itself for war. How far will it go for humanity and peace?

There Is No End

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Canada at War

IN ONE SENSE the place where the war comes closest to home for us in the United States is in our northern neighbor. Yet for obvious journalistic reasons, the newspapers must concern themselves more with the theatres of actual struggle than with the effects of conflict upon Canada. There seems to be little doubt that the overwhelming sentiment in the Dominion is a warlike sentiment, and that all the curtailment of liberty which we know goes with modern warfare has come to Canada, just as it has come to England and France. The latest news of this sort concerns weather reports. These are to be suppressed "for the duration," since making them public "would aid enemy ships lurking in the North Atlantic." The light-hearted may wonder whether this is not taking the skill of the weather man a bit too seriously. But a more disturbing report comes from Toronto, where it is said that Frank Watson, "a member of the British Labor Party," was arrested and held in $10,000 bond because he criticized the government for refusing to pay men on relief the $1.30 per day which they get if they offer themselves as "cannon fodder." The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, the only considerable political party in Canada which has a social program dictated by other considerations than pure expediency, has said flatly "that the same struggle for trade supremacy and political domination which caused the last war, and was perpetuated in the Versailles Treaty, is again the primary cause of the present conflict." But the CCF "recognizes that Canada is now implicated in a struggle which may involve the survival of democratic institutions" and therefore proposes that Canada's policy should be one of economic assistance to England and France, of organizing home defense, but of refusing to participate more actively than that in the war.

A Little Protest

The First Cardinal of the West

CARDINAL MUNDELEIN was a great man and great Prince of the Church and no small volume would be needed to express his position in the history of this country. Here and now, we can only pay our homage to the Archbishop of Chicago. He was a big enough person to symbolize in his life and work the positions he progressively occupied and to leave behind him a deep personal imprint upon his country. Leader of his archdiocese's 1,400,000 Catholics, representative in the world of America's West, and a Prince in this country of our Church, his rôle was great indeed. His reputation is most appropriate to his rôle. The great administrator, acute financier, amazing builder—constructor of 600 edifices in his archdiocese and donor of a $1,500,000 College of the Propaganda in Rome itself! The Eucharistic Congress held in Chicago in 1926 summed up splendidly that side of his career. Then, the Cardinal, bringing into American life the culture and color of a Roman prince: his Grand Cross of the Sovereign Order of Malta, his patronage of all the arts, his intellectual dynamism! "He talked feelingly of how he had tried to make a full place in his young men's lives for flowers, and music and art." With his finesse and administrative effectiveness, Cardinal Mundelein was not afraid of controversy and felt that no tabu surrounded politics. He was sharply critical of the established economic disorder. His political actions were American in concept and practice and were accepted and welcomed by the people at large with no suspicion or resentment. And before the rest, he was a spiritual leader, devoted to works of charity, to teaching of religion, to education of the people and of their pastors.

Death of Cardinal Mundelein

The radio address of his helper, Bishop Bernard J. Sheil, read on Monday night, is a moving testimony to his leadership and proves the continuity of his influence. The day before his death, Bishop Sheil told, "He talked of 'The Undone Task' that lay ahead of him to give the Spirit of America its full place in the Spirit of the Church, and to give the Spirit of the Church its full place in the Spirit of America." Cardinal Mundelein believed in both with a vitality and optimism which we must take up. He had an "exultant happiness and vision of the greatness of America." Agreeing with the President, his friend, that this country offered "the second chance," he found at this crucial time two immediate purposes: "The first purpose is to defend what may be left with us of civilization against the risks of a mad revolutionary Europe blindly rolling on toward new worlds to conquer for Anti-Christ. The second purpose is to be really able to help Europe, purged by its war of the materialistic causes of war, to come to a state of mind conducive to a lasting peace that will not sow the seeds for another war." Bishop Sheil's speech warrants real study as it presents the vision of "a civilization so generous, so magnificent, that youth of all religions and races will care much more for what they give to that magnificence than for what each of them gets out of it." We are warned to respect the processes of representative democracy, and there is a clear attack against the voice of emotional charlatans. In regard to the Neutrality Law, Bishop Sheil follows the lead of the President, as Cardinal Mundelein did, while he expresses the hope that "this session of Congress will furnish a forum in which the American people as a whole can thoroughly educate themselves to their great problem and reach an honest and nation-wide conviction of the wise course to follow. . . ."

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What Should the Farmer Do in a War Boom?

Harvest Time Reflections

ALTHOUGH the flurry in commodity prices has subsided and the American farmer's prospects during a protracted European war are not definitively established, war expansion for American agriculture is widely expected. There are huge surpluses to be disposed of first, and Secretary Wallace has urged 1940 production plans "as if the outbreak in Europe had not occurred." But the protraction of the war with the sinking of cargo ships by submarines and armed raiders would step up the demand tremendously. Our farmers have not yet recovered from the overexpansion of cultivation for the last war. A year after the armistice there was a genuine agricultural crisis; it is of paramount importance to prepare now to cushion the economic effects of the conclusion of the peace so desired by the peoples of the world. The *Farmer* of St. Paul, Minn., has some interesting suggestions for its readers, based on the assumption that this country remains at peace. The first is to pay off capital indebtedness as rapidly as possible; the second, "so far as possible incur nothing more than normal seasonal indebtedness, remembering that borrowed inflated dollars may have to be paid off in the sweat and blood and foreclosures of deflated dollars." The editorial also recommends using capital surplus for farm improvements, "paying cash as much as possible." It warns against extravagance and counsels savings for the seige of hard times to follow the war." Heads of families in cities and countryside please note.

The World Series Opens

Some Reds We'd Like to Win

PERHAPS the most interesting English now being written emanates from the sports writers of our leading metropolitan dailies. Particularly during the baseball season, when the problem of whipping up human interest in many a routine encounter is uppermost, they write with a freshness and a verve that make most other news columns sound stolid. Their slang is of the very latest, uninhibited and picturesque. When this technique is wedded to the cultural background and attainments of a man like John ("Information Please") Kieran, the result is something remarkable in a purely literary sense. So far the world series this fall has stumped the imaginations of our sports writers. The result is held to be a foregone conclusion and interest lags. The crowning blow is that a newscameraman who trekked out to Yankee stadium to catch the enthusiasts who proverbially camp out the eve of the opening battle, to be near the head of the line when ticket windows open, could find only one young man, and he unshaven. An ill omen. But there is always the hope that this year the young men from Cincinnati will provide some real drama of courage and skill that will give the sports reporters something to write about.

Maritain on the War

To His American Friends

ON ANOTHER PAGE appears a moving document transmitted to us by Jacques Maritain and intended by him as a joint letter to his many American friends stating his position with regard to the present war. It is for us an honor and a token of friendship that he should have chosen so to communicate with his American admirers. Yet honesty compels us to say that we cannot accept his analysis as complete. He does not deal with the material bases for this war—empire, colonies, *lebensraum*. Some days ago the press carried notice of the action of the German hierarchy in calling upon Germans to do their duty for their fatherland, in the hope of a happy outcome. English Catholics and French Catholics are also told by authority to do their civic duty. In the last great war it was the same. So also the Church in neutral countries insists that Catholics remain neutral. Bishop Sheil's recent radio address, reported above, and the Belgian Catholic opinion quoted in this week's "Inner Forum" are in evidence. The moral aspect of war largely depends on the relation of each country to the war.

Of course Maritain has not set out to tell Americans how our country should act. He speaks clearly for himself. With Maritain we are indeed convinced that the Russian-German alliance has made manifest much we have long believed. We feel that the pact has torn a mask of pretended antagonism from the inhuman visages of totalitarian Communism and totalitarian Nazism. Millions of Frenchmen and Englishmen are willing to sacrifice themselves and their goods in the belief that they are fighting not for empire but against an inhuman and ugly thing. We respect their belief. But as Americans we cannot leave the very real problems of empire out of our own analysis, nor can we leave out the evils which have already become manifest in England and France as a result of war, evils which must come to any nation that fights a modern war. Said Bishop Sheil, quoting Cardinal Mundelein: "Let us pray . . . for the repose of the souls of the men and boys, hurried into eternity in the springtime of youth, in the strength of young manhood, not of their own volition, pawns on the chess board, fodder for cannon. Pray for those who loved their country and were willing to offer the supreme sacrifice that their children might have freedom and prosperity—and peace."

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Lesson in Criticism

Four questions to ask yourself when you are making up your mind about a book.*

By **Mortimer J. Adler**

LET US SUPPOSE that you are reading a good book, and hence a relatively intelligible one. And let us suppose that you are finally able to say "I understand." If in addition to understanding the book, you agree thoroughly with what the author says, the work is over. The reading is completely done. You have been enlightened—and convinced or persuaded.

Hence it is clear that we have additional steps to consider only in the case of disagreement or suspended judgment.

The meaning of agreement and disagreement deserves a moment's further consideration. The reader who comes to terms with an author, and grasps his propositions and arguments, is *en rapport* with the author's mind. In fact, the whole process of interpretation is directed toward a meeting of minds through the medium of language. Understanding a book can be described as a kind of agreement between writer and reader. They agree about the use of language to express ideas. Because of that agreement, the reader is able to see through the author's language to the ideas he is trying to express.

If the reader understands a book, then how can he disagree with it? Critical reading demands that he make up his own mind. But his mind and the author's have become as one through his success in understanding the book. What mind has he left to make up independently?

There are some people who make the error which causes this apparent difficulty. They fail to distinguish between two senses of "agreement." In consequence, they wrongly suppose that where there is understanding between men, disagreement is impossible.

The error is corrected as soon as we remember that the author is making judgments about the world in which we live. He claims to be giving us theoretic knowledge about the way things exist and behave, or practical knowledge about what should be done. Obviously he can be either right or wrong. His claim is justified only to the extent that he speaks truly, or says what is probable in the light of evidence.

If you say, for instance, that "all men are equal," I may take you to mean that all men are equally endowed at birth with intelligence, strength and other abilities. In the light of the facts as I know them, I disagree with you. I think you are wrong. But suppose I have misunderstood you. Suppose you meant by these words that *all men should have equal political rights*. Because I misapprehended your meaning, my disagreement was irrelevant. Now suppose the mistake corrected. Two alternatives still remain. I agree or disagree, but now if I disagree, there is a real issue between us. I understand your political position, but hold a contrary one.

Agreement about the use of words is the absolutely indispensable condition for genuine agreement or disagreement about the facts being discussed. It is because of, not in spite of, your meeting the author's mind through a sound interpretation of his book, that you are able to make up your own mind as concurring in or dissenting from the position he has taken.

What seems to me now like many years ago, I wrote a book called "Dialectic." It was my first book, and wrong in many ways, but at least it was not as pretentious as its title. It was about the art of intelligent conversation, the etiquette of controversy.

Since men are animals as well as rational, it is necessary to acknowledge the emotions you bring to a dispute, or those which arise in the course of it. Otherwise you are likely to be giving vent to feelings, not stating reasons. You may even think you have reasons, when all you have are feelings.

Furthermore, you must make your own assumptions explicit. You must know what your prejudices—that is, your pre-judgments—are. Otherwise you are not likely to admit that your opponent may be equally entitled to different assumptions. Good controversy should not be a quarrel about assumptions. If an author, for example, explicitly asks you to take something for granted, the fact that the opposite can also be taken for granted should not prevent you from honoring his request.

Finally, I suggested that an attempt at impartiality is a good antidote for the blindness that is inevitable in partisanship. Controversy without partisanship is, of course, impossible. But to be sure that there is more light in it, and less heat, each of the disputants should at least try to take the other fellow's point of view.

* Taken from a chapter of Dr. Adler's book on reading to be published by Simon and Schuster.

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I still think that these three conditions are the *sine qua non* of intelligent and profitable conversation. They are obviously applicable to reading, in so far as that is a kind of conversation between reader and author. Each of them contains sound advice for readers who are willing to respect the decencies of disagreement.

But I have grown older since I wrote "Dialectic." And I am a little less optimistic about what can be expected of human beings. I am sorry to say that most of my disillusionment arises from a knowledge of my own defects. I have so frequently violated all of my own rules about good intellectual manners in controversy. I have so often caught myself *attacking* a book rather than *criticizing* it, knocking straw men over, as if mine were any better than the author's.

I am still naïve enough, however, to think that conversation and critical reading can be well disciplined. Only now, twelve years later, I am going to substitute for the rules of "Dialectic" a set of prescriptions which may be easier to follow. They indicate the four ways in which a book can be *adversely* criticized.

The four points can be briefly summarized by conceiving the reader as conversing with the author, as talking back. After he has said, "I understand, but I disagree," he can make the following remarks. (1) *"You are uninformed."* (2) *"You are misinformed."* (3) *"You are illogical, your reasoning is not cogent."* (4) *"Your analysis is incomplete."*

These may not be exhaustive, though I think they are. In any case, they are certainly the principal points a reader who disagrees can make. They are somewhat independent. Making one of these remarks does not prevent your making another. Each and all can be made, because the defects they refer to are not mutually exclusive.

But, I should add, the reader cannot make any of these remarks without being definite and precise about the respect in which the author is uninformed or misinformed or illogical. A book cannot be uninformed or misinformed about *everything*. It cannot be totally illogical. Furthermore, the reader who makes any of these remarks must not only support his point. He must give reasons for saying what he does.

The first three remarks are somewhat different from the fourth, as you will presently see. Let us consider each of them briefly.

(1) To say that an author is *uninformed* is to say that he lacks some piece of knowledge which is *relevant* to the problem he is trying to solve. Notice here that unless the knowledge, if possessed by the author, would have been relevant, there is no point in making this remark. To support the remark you must be able yourself to state the knowledge which the author lacks and show how it is relevant, how it makes a difference.

A few illustrations here must suffice. Darwin lacked the knowledge of genetics which the work of Mendel and later experimentalists now provides. His ignorance of the mechanism of inheritance is one of the major defects in "The Origin of Species." Gibbon lacked certain facts which later historical research has shown to have a bearing on the fall of Rome. Usually, in science and history, the lack of information is discovered by later researches. Improved techniques of observation and prolonged investigation make this the way things happen for the most part. But in philosophy it may happen otherwise. There is just as likely to be loss as gain with the passage of time. David Hume lacked knowledge of the distinction between ideas and images, which had been well established by earlier philosophers.

(2) To say that an author is *misinformed* is to say that he asserts what is not the case. His error here may be due to lack of knowledge, but the error is more than that. Whatever its cause, it consists of assertions contrary to fact. The author is proposing as true or more probable what is in fact false or less probable. He is claiming to have knowledge he doesn't possess. To support the remark you must be able to argue the truth or greater probability of a position contrary to his.

For example, in a political treatise, Spinoza appears to say that democracy is a more primitive type of government than monarchy. This is contrary to well-ascertained facts of political history. Spinoza's error in this respect has a bearing on his argument. Aristotle was misinformed about the rôle which the male factor played in animal reproduction, and consequently came to unsupportable conclusions about the processes of procreation. Thomas Aquinas erroneously supposed that the heavenly bodies only changed in position, that they were otherwise unalterable. Modern astro-physics corrects this error and thereby improves on ancient and medieval astronomy. But here is an error which has limited relevance. Making it does not affect St. Thomas's metaphysical account of the nature of all corporeal things as composed of matter and form.

These first two points of criticism are somewhat related. Lack of information, as we have seen, may be the cause of erroneous assertions. Further, whenever a man is misinformed, he is also uninformed of the truth. But it makes a difference whether the defect be simply negative, or positive as well. Lack of relevant knowledge makes it impossible to solve certain problems or support certain conclusions. Erroneous suppositions, however, lead to wrong conclusions and untenable solutions. Taken together, these two points charge an author with defects in his premises. He needs more knowledge than he has.

(3) To say that an author is illogical is to say that he has committed a fallacy in reasoning. In

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general, fallacies are of two sorts. There is the *non sequitur,* which means that what is offered as a conclusion simply does not follow from the grounds proposed. And there is the occurrence of *inconsistency,* which means that two things the author has tried to say are incompatible. To make either of these criticisms, the reader must be able to show the precise respect in which the author's argument lacks cogency. One is concerned with this defect only to the extent that the major conclusions are affected by it. A book may lack cogency in irrelevant respects.

It is more difficult to illustrate this third point, because few great books make obvious slips in reasoning. When they do occur, they are usually elaborately concealed, and it requires a very penetrating reader to discover them. But I can show you a patent fallacy which I found in a recent reading of Machiavelli's "Prince:"

> The chief foundations of all states, new as well as old, are good laws. As there cannot be good laws where the state is not well armed, it follows that where they are well armed they have good laws.

Now it simply doesn't *follow from* the fact that good laws depend on an adequate police force, *that* where the police force is adequate, the laws will necessarily be good. I am ignoring the highly questionable character of the first fact. I am only interested in the *non sequitur* here. Machiavelli failed to distinguish between what are called necessary and sufficient conditions.

In his "Elements of Law," Hobbes argues in one place that all bodies are nothing but quantities of matter in motion. The world of bodies, he says, has no qualities whatsoever. Then, in another place, he argues that man is himself nothing but a body, or a collection of atomic bodies in motion. Yet, admitting the existence of sensory qualities—colors, odors, tastes, and so forth—he concludes that they are nothing but the motions of atoms in the brain. This conclusion is inconsistent with the position first taken, namely, that the world of bodies in motion is without qualities. What is said of *all* bodies in motion must apply to any particular group of them.

This third point of criticism is related to the other two. An author may, of course, fail to draw the conclusions which his evidences or principles imply. Then his reasoning is incomplete. But we are here concerned primarily with the case in which he reasons poorly from good grounds.

The first three points of criticism, which we have just considered, deal with the soundness, the truth and accuracy, of the author's statements and reasoning. Let us turn now to the fourth adverse remark a reader can make. It deals with the completeness of the author's execution of his plan—the adequacy with which he discharges the task he has chosen.

Before we proceed to this fourth remark, one thing should be observed. If you as a reader cannot support any of these first three remarks, you are then obligated to agree with the author as far as he has gone. You have no freedom of will about this. It is not your sacred privilege to decide whether you are going to agree or disagree.

Since you have not been able to show that the author is uninformed, misinformed or illogical on relevant matters, you simply cannot disagree. You must agree. You cannot say, as so many students and others do, "I find nothing wrong with your premises, and no errors in reasoning, but I don't agree with your conclusions." All you can possibly mean by saying something like this is that you don't *like* the conclusions. You aren't disagreeing. You're expressing your emotions or prejudices. If you have been convinced, you should admit it.

(4) To say that an author's analysis is *incomplete* is to say that he hasn't solved all the problems he started with; or that he hasn't made as good a use of his materials as possible, that he didn't see all their implications and ramifications; or that he has failed to make distinctions which are relevant to his undertaking. It is not enough to say that a book is incomplete. Anyone can say that of any book. Men are finite, and so are their works, every last one. There is no point in making this remark unless the reader can define the inadequacy precisely, either by his own efforts as a knower, or through the help of other books.

Let me illustrate this point briefly. The analysis of types of government in Aristotle's "Politics" is incomplete. It doesn't consider, naturally enough, either representative government or the modern kind of federated state. The analysis would have to be extended to apply to these political phenomena. Euclid's "Elements of Geometry" is an incomplete account because he failed to consider other postulates about the relation of parallel lines. Modern geometrical works, making these other assumptions, supply the deficiencies. Dewey's "How We Think" is an incomplete analysis of thinking because it fails to treat the sort of thinking which occurs in reading or learning by instruction, in addition to the sort which occurs in investigation and discovery.

This fourth point is strictly not a basis for disagreement. It is critically adverse only to the extent that it marks the limitations of the author's achievement. A reader who agrees with a book in part—because he has failed to support any of the other points of adverse criticism—may, nevertheless, suspend judgment on the whole, in the light of this fourth point about the book's incompleteness.

Related books in the same field can be critically compared by reference to these four criteria. One is better than another in proportion as it speaks more truth and makes fewer errors. If we are

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reading for knowledge, that book is best, obviously, which most adequately treats a given subject-matter. One author may lack information which another possesses; one may make erroneous suppositions from which another is free; one may be less cogent than another in reasoning from similar grounds. But the profoundest comparison is made with respect to the completeness of the analysis which each presents. That is one of the marks of real greatness.

To My American Friends

One of the greatest of living French and Catholic philosophers addresses himself to his American friends, giving his view of the importance of the present conflict.*

By Jacques Maritain

AS I WRITE these lines I think of my personal friends and of all those who, a few months ago, so generously welcomed me in New York, in Chicago, in Iowa City, in Notre Dame, in Boston, in Washington, in Providence, in Annapolis, in Charlottesville. It is for all these that I am writing as though to continue in the midst of sorrows the discussions which began in that precarious kind of peace in which the world was then living. *Then!* It was in the autumn of 1938; the weeks through which we have just been living have already pushed back that time into the distant past.

Of what could we then speak in all our conversations if it was not the sufferings of the world and the perils which threatened civilization? Everywhere I was struck by the anxious and generous concern with which America viewed these problems. Very often we asked each other what could be the destiny of Europe, and sometimes we wondered if western civilization, our common Christian civilization, caught between two equally monstrous forms of slavery and scorn for the human conscience—the totalitarianism of the communist state and the totalitarianism of the racist state—could withstand the forces of spiritual disintegration which threatened it.

Well, the thing which I want to say at once and that I want to cry from the house tops is that the spiritual situation of Europe has completely changed and that the salvation of Europe has begun. I am absolutely convinced that western civilization will be saved. To be more precise, it *is* already saved. At the price of whatever mass sacrifice, perhaps of what torrents of blood, of what destruction, after however many months of sorrow and agony, this salvation may be realized in events themselves, I beg you to believe that on that subject I am not suffering from any optimistic illusion. I know what night we are entering; into what general ruin it is feared that the civilized universe may be thrown. But I also know that in this ruin the universe will not perish; I know that this night is not a night of despair but a night of resurrection. For anyone who seeks to understand the drama of human history from a point of view beyond that of the immediate moment, it seems that he must have an unshakable confidence in the final result of the war which has just begun.

I said that the spiritual situation of Europe has completely changed: the striking indication of this change is the Russo-German alliance. It has completed the unmasking of the enemy. For a long time, for a very long time, people everywhere—in the old world as well as in the new—had been asking themselves this question: are we not forced to choose between Communism and Hitlerism? How many souls were tempted by their just horror of the racist and totalitarian slavery to sympathize with Communism; how many were tempted by their just horror of the Communist slavery to sympathize with totalitarianism? In the name of the "principle of the lesser evil," falsely applied, were thus excused all crimes. And when we took pains ceaselessly to explain that here was a question of two opposite aspects of the same evil, of two horns of the same devil, only those understood who attached some importance to the philosophy of history. Now the whole world understands, in the shattering clarity of events. One has only to see in one's mind Herr von Ribbentrop, the promoter of the anti-Comintern agreements, decorated with the Order of Lenin; it is sufficient to see Stalin and Ribbentrop shaking hands while they smile at one another the cynical smile of accomplices.

The moral sickness from which the Occident was wasting away, the horrible lie by virtue of which each believed himself obliged to choose between one bad thing and another bad thing and to set up one evil in opposition to another evil—such was the profound thing which threatened the civilized world with a self-destruction for which there was no remedy. That thing has disappeared. The false front of being a defender of order and

* The text of this article arrived in New York passed by the French official censor.

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civilization by which with diabolical hypocrisy the revolution of Hitler had disguised itself has fallen away. Iniquity and violence have met; the Marxist opposition to Christianity has embraced Hitler's opposition to Christianity. Everybody clearly realizes that, whether bolstered by the myth of the dictatorship of one class or by the myth of the superiority of one race—by the Marxist-Stalinist myth of the state calling itself socialist, embodying the proletariat and its destiny, or by the Hitler myth of the state calling itself "proletarian," embodying the superior race and its destiny—there is only one revolution; and this revolution is in essence directed against the first principles of all Christian civilization, against everything which indicates the mark of God on man, against everything which implies respect for the human person, for justice and for truth, against everything which relates to greatness and liberty of the human soul. Hitler is the precursor (*fourrier*) of Stalin.

The illusion which held that the world was divided between the two antagonistic forces of Communist totalitarianism and of racist totalitarianism has been dispelled. Moreover, we know clearly that both one and the other totalitarianism are in reality but a single spirit, a single homicidal force. And face to face with that force is another which one can no longer call a "third" force (since the two which it opposed at the same time are now joined together)—that very force which created Europe and which has its purest sources in the Gospel, and which, while it requires our civilization to purify and renew itself in a radical way, nevertheless appears manifest as the vital principle of that same civilization. Here is the capital historical change which, in the spiritual order, we have just witnessed.

I have said that western civilization is already saved: the signal indication of that salvation is the way in which two people who have a horror of war have entered into war to stop the monstrous enterprise of Hitler's domination. When, on the level of temporal strife, anti-Christian totalitarian force took up with Hitler the arms of military aggression, when, treading underfoot all international good faith, German National Socialism undertook to impose by violence its will upon Poland and to devour that country while sheltering itself under the terror of a general European war, at that moment France and Great Britain took up the challenge; they deliberately opened the gates of war, knowing to what they exposed themselves.

I will not enter here into any historical discussion about international politics as they have been carried out since Hitler's coming to power, or even since the end of the last war. I merely say that concrete circumstances being what they were at the end of August and the beginning of September, 1939, the declaration of war against Germany by England and France on Sunday, the third of September, was not simply an action that had become politically necessary. It was also an admirable evidence of the strength of soul and of the moral greatness of these two countries. The world then saw that all the concessions which had previously been made for the sake of peace did not arise from the fear of war but from horror of war; the world saw that, when the day came, the democracies which are so much scorned by the totalitarian despots were willing to risk everything in order to remain faithful to the reason for their existence; the world saw that in order to obey, as free men, something divine of which many did not know the right name but for which all preserved in themselves a living instinct, the men of France and England, of those two ancient Christian lands, risked in the perils of a hellish war both their lives and their dearest goods and the incomparable heritage of civilization of which they are the guardians. The action I speak of here is the action not only of governments; it is the action of the peoples themselves. Those who have seen how the people of France accepted the war without any hatred, without any passionate excitement, with calm courage and a silent resolution to serve their country to the very end, and with an heroic dedication of self, so that men may lead on this earth a human life, know that before God Europe is already saved. Civilization does not die unless it betrays itself. As long as it is capable of actions such as this one, it can suffer the most enormous losses; it is sure that it will not perish. However terrible may be the ordeal it will not be a tragedy but a sacrifice. And the end of a tragedy is death; but the end of a sacrifice is salvation and resurrection. At every crucial moment in history the French people have thus brought to a halt the powers of destruction, paying with their lives. They continue the tradition.

Jeanne d'Arc left us this prophecy: that one day France and England would unite to accomplish together a great enterprise. In one sense the present war seems to be the continuation of the war of 1914, but now its apocalyptic aspect has become manifest. Quite obviously it is for the common good of civilized humanity that France and England suffer and fight and that Poland has been martyred; it is for the fundamental human values to which every free spirit in the world, particularly the spirit of the American nation, is attached. I know that the American public is clearly aware of this; that is why it is sufficient for me to mention the point briefly. If Hitler should triumph, the ideal of a society of free men, based on an effective respect for the rights of the person, offering to each an equal opportunity to develop the gifts which each has received from God, and allowing for fraternal cooperation, would receive a heart's blow. But Hitler will not triumph.

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Charles DuBos

France and the Church lose a sensitive critic and man of letters.

***By* Sister M. Madeleva**

Charles DuBos, gentle and accomplished man of letters, with his charming wife, Zezette, lived on the Ile St.-Louis, in beautiful rooms overlooking the Seine and the Choir of Notre-Dame. There at carefully selected gatherings, small tea parties or smaller luncheons, I met many well-known authors, poets, novelists and literary celebrities of every sort. For, somewhat like Nadia Boulanger, DuBos has devoted his life to his enthusiasm for the work of others. François Mauriac, Paul Valéry, André Gide, Paul Bourget, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Rainier Maria Rilke and a host of others were all his good friends, and held his opinion in high esteem. What good talk there was and how pleasant to listen to, while the river flowed under the bridges gleaming in the afternoon light as the spires and buttresses of Notre-Dame grew darker against the western sky.

THIS PARAGRAPH from "Autumn in the Valley," by Mrs. Winthrop Chanler, epitomizes the manner and life and work of this rare scholar, who has come to be accepted as one of the finest critical minds of our time.

Charles DuBos was by vocation a lover of letters, a disciple of words, as of the Word. In all surroundings, he gravitated naturally and always to the deep seriousness of the student. This over the period of a lifetime resulted in the profound acquirements of the scholar. The scope and penetration of his learning were its obvious dimensions. Holiness was its essence. The story of all this will some day be unique biography. Meanwhile something can be done by way of appreciation.

One may well begin at the beautiful apartment at 4 rue des Deux Ponts on the Ile St.-Louis. This has been for many years the home of the DuBoses and a rare literary center of Paris. Here, by gracious appointment or happy invitation, came writers, artists, pilgrims, from the cultures of all the world. Entering the living room, they found themselves immediately in a home of beauty, in a dwelling of the mind. They felt themselves uplifted and upheld by truth. Below and in the immediate foreground they saw the Cathedral of Notre-Dame, its apse and delicate spire tranquil above the busyness of the river and the world. This was something more than landscape. It was the vital center of the DuBos home. Every day began with the seven-thirty Mass in the Lady Chapel of the Cathedral. Every Mass terminated with the kiss of peace exchanged between the quartette that composed the family, Charlie and Zezette, Primerose and Madge.

Beyond the living room lay that world of books, the library. Here one found Charles DuBos truly at home. A deference finer than the grace of the French gentleman characterized his welcome to his guests. He seated them close beside him, then met their minds with a dignity worthy of his own. The rows and piles and shelves of books gave outward manifestation of that.

Charles DuBos had been a student at Oxford in 1900, at Florence in 1904, at Berlin in 1905. Apart from his exhaustive knowledge of French thought, he was a profound student of English, German and Italian literature and lectured brilliantly in all these languages as in his own. The word "profound" must be understood to indicate a depth amazing in its exhaustiveness and penetrating in its clarity. It included a preparation simultaneously philosophical and literary. Bergson was the teacher out of his own century of whom M. DuBos spoke with deep affection as one who had influenced him most. Saint Augustine was his greater and even more beloved master.

His wide scope

Looking about his library, one got a bewildering sense of the scope of his interests and of his studies. He read always the best in current literature, and one may say he read the best out of current literature. He read back into the nineteenth and eighteenth centuries with scrupulous thoroughness and understanding. He gave himself with peculiar philosophical competence to the study of Goethe. His intellectual devotion went to Walter Pater and his love to Keats. He interpreted Pascal with deep spiritual sympathy. His lectures on the Brownings and on Claudel are unforgettable.

Out of this world of books grew the life of M. DuBos, for he gave more than a good half of his time and strength to intense creative criticism of the writing of the last three centuries. This he dictated for the most part in French. A study on Walter Pater he had planned to make simultaneously in English and French. His long study of Byron has been translated into English. A series of lectures given originally in English under the title "What Is Literature?" is now in the hands of an English publisher. His essays as

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a whole are published in Paris (usually by R. A. Correa) under the general title "Approximations." There are seven volumes of these. They include studies of Patmore, Charles Morgan, Baudelaire, Tolstoy, Hardy, Maurice Baring, Thomas Mann, John Middleton Murry, André Maurois. His "Le Dialogue avec André Gide" and "Le Problème du Romancier Catholique" are separate volumes. Here, altogether, one has what may easily come to be accepted as some of the best critical writing of our century. But it is less by these than by his diary, that intimate chronicle of his prayers, his daily communion with God and man entitled "Extraits d'un Journal," that his place is assured in the memory of men.

Through his "Journal" one sees pass the unique and reverent procession of his friends. They came to him from all worlds, from all ages, and in every need. His friend, François Mauriac, has just written of him:

> No one during these last years met him without being helped. With what charity, what respect, he received the confidences of human love! What welcome waited those who brought their griefs to him, and how the wind of grace blew wide his door! He responded to every appeal, nor repulsed a single hand extended to him.

Naturally his world of literary associates was wide and rich. For thirty years Gertrude Atherton was his devoted friend. A picture of her taken at the age of ten stood on the desk in his daughter's room. The same portrait, enlarged and in oil, hung in the study of Mrs. Wharton's home in Hyères. André Maurois, T. S. Eliot, Thornton Wilder, Desmond Fitzgerald, Frank Sheed, were, from various continents, of his world and mind. On his recent visits to America, the Abbé Dimnet visited the DuBoses whom he described as "Babes in the Woods, one of whom," he said, "is a genius." Gertrud von le Fort, the German novelist and poet, was for many years close to his life. An attempt at enumeration is useless. . . . In that group none were more intimate than the Maritains, Jacques and Raïssa.

His American visit

In 1937 the Reverend John O'Hara invited M. DuBos to come to the University of Notre Dame as a guest professor. Two incidents out of that experience, unacademic though they be, describe the man abundantly. When his train reached South Bend, he had already been identified by the Pullman porter, who had seen his picture in the morning paper and accorded him all the deference of the very great. His clear, kind, blue eyes, his drooping moustache, his student's shoulders, his cane, all came almost immediately to characterize this gentle European scholar in a most American environment. Committed by the porter to the mid-western scene, he went with his family at once to his temporary home on Peashway that grew dear to him with intense and intimate associations. He lunched and then arranged immediately for daily Mass and his weekly confession. Only after these had been provided for beyond mishap did he advert to his academic program and schedule. In 1927 he had had the overwhelming experience of religious conversion. His spiritual director, the Abbé Altermann, had advised the practice of daily Mass and Holy Communion, and he obeyed with tenderness and tears.

Frequently M. DuBos was invited to lecture away from the university. Once a friend ventured to explain that his audience would not be of college level intellectually. "In that case," answered M. DuBos quickly, "I shall improvise. I can speak below my level. I cannot write below my level." Nothing so characterizes him as this devout Catholicity, this unfaltering honesty, "the spirit of sweet inflexibility," as Mauriac calls it. To have seen him assist at Mass, to have listened to him lecture, to have heard him intone the "Come, Holy Spirit," as he always did at the beginning of his classes, was to have entered with him deeply into the life of the spirit.

On the tenth of June, M. DuBos sailed for France on the Normandie with his wife and daughter. Madame DuBos wrote from the boat and Primerose from Paris, reporting continuous illness during the trip. This was part of the chronic condition from which he had suffered for thirty years and which had become so acute in the spring as to prevent further writing or teaching. A letter from Primerose from La Celle St. Cloud reads:

> Father died last Saturday, the fifth, on the feast of Saint Mary of the Snow. He had the death he deserved, the death of a saint. He was quite conscious and asked himself for the sacraments. He had time to speak to each of us in particular, to tell us about his unfinished work. It was so great, so beautiful, that it gives courage to mother and to me.

It is impossible to measure the inheritance into which we have entered through the death of Charles DuBos. The life that was light which he gave so lucidly under the veil of mortality now shines upon us through his participation in the beatific vision.

In the List

In the list of Christian peoples, none can
match the sons of Erin
For the prayers of praise they offer to the
Lord of love and light;
Sends He storm or pest or deluge, sure they'll
not be after carin',
Who in bitter famine thanked Him for a
hearty appetite.

GERARD S. SLOYAN.

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Margaret Fuller: An Appreciation

A hundred years ago her "conversation classes" started in Boston; today women have rights undreamed of then.

By **M. Whitcomb Hess**

"YESTERNIGHT there came a bevy of Americans from Emerson, one Margaret Fuller, the chief figure of them," Carlyle wrote in his Journal on a fall morning in 1846. In a letter to Emerson shortly afterward the gloomy prophet of Craigenputtock rather explosively conceded that "Margaret is an excellent soul." "I have been reading some of her papers," he continued, "—undeniable utterances of a truly heroic mind, altogether unique so far as I know among the writing women of this generation; rare enough too, God knows, among the writing men."

This was high praise from Carlyle, but Miss Fuller did not return the compliment. The mind of the man who is today appealed to by the Nazis as an advocate of their "leader" idea never seemed to her to be "truly heroic." Before she carried Emerson's greetings to Carlyle on her first—and last—trip to England, she had observed in her review of "Cromwell" that its author did not know how to pick his heroes. If Carlyle had "the disposal of the holy oil," she said, he would be tempted "to pour it on the head of him who is taller by a head than his brethren . . ."; and this was written long before the appearance of Carlyle's eulogistic life of Frederick the Great.

In her conversations with Carlyle Miss Fuller found him arrogant and overbearing, though she had approached him with more reverence than she had felt for him in America. "A little experience of England and Scotland," she confessed, "taught me to appreciate the strength and height of that wall of shams and conventions which he, more than any other man, or thousand men—indeed, he almost alone—has begun to throw down." But all attempts at social constructiveness she saw him "the readiest to deride, fearing new shams worse than the old, unable to trust the general action of a thought." The burning belief of his American visitor, on the other hand, was that something could and must be done beyond the mere caviling at ancient wrongs. Her especial creed, as Higginson said of her, was that "the best part of intellect is action." To that sharp-eyed New Englander the famous hero-worshipper guided by the stars of Weimar and Potsdam, "the Siegfried of England," Thomas Carlyle, was "only a lion." He whose effect is to destroy evil rather than to legislate for good lacks the essential moral motive, and none knew this better than the *Tribune's* honest reporter, who could still applaud the courage with which Carlyle had "torn the veils off hideous facts" and commend his war on British shams.

Less than four years after her visit to England, within sight of the America where she was never to live again, Margaret Fuller—at the age of forty years—was drowned. Dying in the shipwreck with her were her young Italian husband, the Marquis Ossoli, and their baby son, Angelo. Meanwhile she was to open the second act of her life's work and close it in her book on Italy, which was also lost when the ship *Elizabeth* struck the sand-bars of Long Island on July 19, 1850. The first act had had a better fate: the movement Miss Fuller had started in her unique "conversation classes" in West Street, Boston, on November 6, 1839, was developed into our present laws for woman's equal rights with man—an idea that had been considered by educators since Plato but about which nothing had been done through the centuries.

"Let our sex never forget Margaret Fuller," an early feminist said years after the Marchioness's tragic death. Women's social equality with man, plus her equality as a citizen, those two phenomenal developments of the last century, came primarily from her accomplished spadework. They are, nevertheless, accepted by most of us as matter-of-factly as the air we breathe. As Chesterton once remarked, "Ingratitude is one of the chief intellectual sins of man: we forget where we stand in relation to natural phenomena and we forget it in relation to social phenomena." Yet when Miss Fuller began her campaign, she faced the entrenched prejudice of ages and there were few indeed who believed it could be moved; even among those most in sympathy with the gargantuan project. Such an extension of actual privilege as she held out for was seen as an ideal to be realized only in part, if at all.

On what did Miss Fuller rest the lever that was to move a world so long opposed to the establishing of woman's rights? She rested it on the language itself. She began simply by helping the women of her Boston classes to think for themselves. Understanding the fundamental importance of words as the tools of our knowledge, she believed in learning their use for the same reason

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as that given recently by President Hutchins, that is, for education. And education to the leader of the "conversations" meant what it means etymologically, "to grow a crop." The seeds she planted were not those usually associated with woman's rights. They were such germinal notions as "The human family is one 'and beats with one great heart,' "; or, "There can be no genuine happiness, no salvation for any, unless the same can be secured for all." In those weekly Saturday morning meetings over five short academic years (1839-1844) she encouraged her students to gain mastery over their thoughts by teaching them to express themselves. The results were revolutionary; and her own little book, "Woman in the Nineteenth Century," a direct outcome of that association of minds in the "conversation" groups, carried this message to woman everywhere: as arbiter of her own destiny, she could have whatever was right for her with "equality before the law with her titular lord and master" (as Greeley said in a masterpiece of understatement) a mere bit of collateral justice.

The Boston classes were examples of Miss Fuller's own educational theories in practice. The "superficial diffusion of knowledge" that usually passes for education had no place here. The active teacher once outlined her "methods": "My wish has been more and more to purify my own conscience . . . to give clear views of the aims of this life, to show them [her pupils] where the magazines of knowledge lie and leave the rest to themselves and the spirit that must teach and help them to self-impulse." So well did she overcome their "resistance to liberation" (the barrier Plato recognized as the most formidable in education) that, as one of the women said later, "You felt exhilarated by the compliment of being found out, and even that she cared to find you out."

As a true educator her work was to waken latent activity and point the way to the storehouses of potential knowledge. Some of that truth her pupils might make their own, and in the process realize their destinies. In a *Tribune* review she wrote: "No man can be absolutely true to himself, eschewing cant, compromise, servile imitation and complaisance, without becoming original." This was her theme from first to last: the possibility as well as the desirability of individual vision and accomplishment. Once on the margin beside an account of Correggio in a book on Italian painters, she penciled the line: "And yet all might be such." The artist Hunt, reading the comment, felt fresh power in himself. "These words," he is reported to have said, "struck out new strength in me. They made me set my face like a flint." Above all, this need to keep mental windows clean obtains in the field of morals that was this teacher's province. She could never confuse a legal status with moral competence.

Wherever the higher learning for women or any other legal right was not used with a definitely noble social aim, the right represented to Miss Fuller not progress or emancipation but privilege fortified by the Dark Tower, "blind as the fool's heart." When she went to Italy and heard America spoken of as "the land of liberty" (the Marquis Ossoli himself spoke thus of his wife's native country), she remembered unhappily how far her nation was from actually being free. There were too many "word heroes"—how she loathed their hypocrisy!—too many who felt that the freedom-clause of the Declaration licensed them "to pamper their appetites and their indolence through the misery of their fellow-beings." Yet the direct affirmation of political equality was a witness to her of vast energy at work. "It is not in vain," she decided, "that the verbal statement has been made, 'All men are born free and equal.' " Certainly a nationalistic attitude was on her view something worse than merely the true American: "Those who are not, like the brutes that perish, content with the enjoyment of mere national advantages, indifferent to the idea they represent, cannot forget that the human family is one. . . ."

Too practical to overlook the flaws in her friends' utopian Brook Farm experiment, she was nonetheless an uncompromising idealist. Elsewhere* I have suggested that Robert Browning's powerful dramatic poem, "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came," may be a characterization of the Marchioness Ossoli. The Ossoli family spent the winter of 1849-50 in Florence and there knew the two poets, Robert and Elizabeth Browning; all were ardently interested in the Italian struggle for liberty. (The Marchioness had been superintendent of a Roman hospital for soldiers, the *Fate Bene Fratelli,* during the summer of 1849; and here she had worked night and day, foreshadowing on a small scale Florence Nightingale's labors in the Crimea.) With Mazzini the Brownings were known to have written memoirs of the American after her death—memoirs themselves believed lost in transit over the Atlantic. Why should not Browning have portrayed her as Childe Roland? That monologue expresses just such a spirit as the poet must have seen in Margaret Fuller. Written at Paris in one day, January 3, 1852 (published in *Men and Women,* 1855), "Childe Roland symbolizes" —so say the critics—"the Conquest of Despair by Fealty to the Ideal." The fearless mind and indomitable will of the Massachusetts feminist appear in the portrait of the legendary knight: In full awareness of the dark powers lying in wait he sounds his unconditional challenge to them all, pitting against their strength his dauntless faith in the ultimate triumph of righteousness.

* "Conversations in Boston, 1939," *The Catholic World,* June, 1939.

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Advance in Art Books

A critic looks at a score of books on the fine arts that have recently been published in America.

By Jerome Mellquist

THE ART BOOKS of the last few seasons testify to a great and fundamental advance in American appreciation and feeling. And the surge forward this fall is so wide and inclusive, and in some cases so pronounced and meritorious, that it is now time to look back over the terrain covered to see how far we have come.

The turn took place in 1929. That fall, it will be remembered, the Museum of Modern Art opened its doors in New York, and, equally important, published the first of the catalogues which were to appear in conjunction with its exhibitions. This first effort ("Cézanne, Gauguin, Seurat, Van Gogh") was a good one; it was cheap, and it was contrived to attract a vast potential new audience to modern art. Subsequent catalogues maintained this standard. Who has forgotten, for example, the "Cubism and Abstract Art" (1936), which already has become an indispensable reference work in the field; the compact and satisfying volume on African Negro Art; the delightful Marin; the small but excellent paper "leaflets" on Klee and Rouault? Nor was the Museum remiss in the promotion of the book making process itself. Under the sensitive direction of Mr. Monroe Wheeler, it presented a show of "Modern Painters and Sculptors as Illustrators," which tastefully and convincingly demonstrated that the contribution of these twentieth century men to the art of book-publishing was much greater than had been generally supposed.

A somewhat different development was simultaneously taking place at the Whitney Museum, also in New York. Here individual monographs were being published on living American artists such as Sloan and Schnackenberg, Luks and Demuth, some of whom have since died and thus made these volumes all the more valuable. Unevenly edited though they sometimes were, these are still the only source-books on some of the men in question. Add to them Virgil Barker's "Critical Introduction to American Painting," still the most penetrating work in its field; Goodrich's thorough and compendious "Eakins" and Murrell's irreplaceable two-volume "History of American Graphic Humor" and it will be seen that the downtown institution was not falling behind its more publicized rival in the fifties. These books have since been taken over by Macmillan.

Prompted no doubt by such examples, the Metropolitan Museum began also to improve. One has only to compare its Goya catalogue of some seasons back with its Tiepolo of last year to appreciate how much has been added in grace, lightness and general appeal. This progress was continued in the lively catalogue for the "Life in America" show, still current. The price of these publications has at all times been exceedingly modest, which in itself is a recommendation. The Pennsylvania Museum has gone forward in like degree. Its "Degas" and "Daumier," of three and two years ago respectively, have been attractive examples of what a museum can do by way of inexpensive but sound and pleasing catalogues. Nor should the Boston Museum be forgotten, particularly in view of the excellent publications which celebrated its stunning Japanese show of three years ago.

The publishers step in

But it is the commercial publishers themselves who have contributed most noticeably to the general improvement. The record here is a shorter one, but it is all the more significant for that reason. First and foremost come the publications of the Phaidon Press, which are issued by Oxford. In less than three seasons this house has given us a first-rate Rembrandt, a good volume on the Impressionists, another on El Greco, the two stimulating collections entitled "Art Without Epoch," "500 Self-Portraits" and many others. Their recent "Masterpieces of European Painting in America" continues this record, and it is to be expected that Oxford's new series of "Iris Books" will be no less acceptable. The first of these, by the way, will be on stained glass windows.

Another house which has been concentrating on art books is Macmillan's. "Art and Society," by Herbert Read, which it issued three years ago, was a model of printing, page design and reproduction. The ambitious "Audubon" of the following season was less successful. But Sir Kenneth Clark's "Leonardo da Vinci" and Roger Fry's "Last Lectures," both on this fall's list, compare with the best that this house has done. The Fry, with its 347 handsome plates, is particularly felicitous.

Viking's "World History of Art" by Sheldon Cheney, which came out two years ago, was, unfortunately, overshadowed by Van Loon's more

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popular volume, issued simultaneously by Simon and Schuster. But it remains a treasure-house not only of reproductions but of handy data on the development of art throughout the ages. Viking's much earlier "David Octavius Hill" is, to my mind, superior to anything else that our commercial publishers have yet produced in a book on photography as an art. As for "The Arts," here Mr. Van Loon was at his best, particularly in the field of painting. True, he skimmed, but he did so deftly; surely he introduced many a reader to artists they had never heard of before. His pen-and-ink drawings had their charm, too. The same publisher's "Treasury of American Prints," edited by Thomas Craven and issued this season, does its job less well. Though adequate so far as reproductions go, it is neither representative, discriminating nor just—merely another case of Mr. Craven's favorites. Nor can one be any more enthusiastic about the contemporary Americans he so brazenly includes in his book of World Masterpieces.

The best productions by Harcourt, Brace have been the never-sufficiently appreciated "Art and Industry" by Herbert Read, Constance Rourke's "Audubon," with its lovely plates of his birds, and the formidable "Cézanne," by Barnes and De Mazia. Here the reproductions make accessible most of the salient works by the master. Harper's deserve credit for their original book of two seasons ago, Samuel A. Lewisohn's "Painters and Personality." Commendations should also go to Henry Holt and Company for the copious and agreeable illustrations it employed in Frank Jewett Mather's "Venetian Painters." It is to be hoped that his forthcoming "Western European Painting since the Renaissance" will be just as good. Studio Publications, long known for the quality of their reproductions, gave forth one of their best efforts in their "Whistler" of some time ago. Incidentally, the book recalled what a fine painter "Butterfly Jimmy" was. Another publication of this house, both readable and compelling, was W. Gaunt's "Bandits in a Landscape," which traced out a tradition hitherto ignored in European painting. "Verve," that permanent exhibition between covers, also deserves a word or two, particularly for its World's Fair Number, which contains 200 portraits from all ages.

Among the most responsible undertakings of recent years have been the "Delacroix Journals," admirably translated by Walter Pach and published two seasons ago by the now-defunct Covici-Friede, and the "Journals of Leonardo da Vinci," in two volumes, by Reynal and Hitchcock. Both were well-designed and printed, with good reproductions and a fine general "feel." R. & H.'s follow-up in the "Drawings of Leonardo," to be issued this season in a binding uniform with the "Journals," is further evidence that the firm is intent upon completing the job in the proper manner.

Another field of improvement is to be found in biographies of artists. Van Gogh's "Letters" are perhaps the most generally known, but last season's "Leonardo," by Antonia Vallentin (Viking), as well as Gerstle Mack's "Toulouse-Lautrec" and his earlier "Cézanne" (Knopf), have added much to our understanding of these artists. The same is true of "John Marin" by E. M. Benson, which was the first publication of the American Federation of Art.

In the field of American Art the present season is notable. Edward Alden Jewell's "Is There an American Art?" might serve as the title for a discussion of the subject. Barr and Cahill's "Art in America," now available in the Blue Ribbon Classics (Doubleday, Doran), will go far to answer the question. Peyton Boswell Jr.'s "Modern American Painting," however, might suggest a negative. It has omitted several of the most important names, and those that it does include it reproduces harshly and to the accompaniment of an obtuse text.

Forbes Watson's "American Painting Today," scheduled for November (Oxford), and Albert Whitman's "Art for the Millions" (Federal Art Project), due this month, will again present material for and against the question as put by Mr. Jewell. James T. Flexner's "America's Old Masters" (Viking) will show what our ancestors were able to do, while Art Young's "Life and Times" (Sheridan House) will tell the story from the point of view of the cartoonist.

Finally we arrive at the most surprising development of all: the American artist is beginning to publish himself! This was seldom the case before 1929, because then, as a rule, he was unable to cooperate sufficiently with his fellows to make such a project possible. But now we have the American Artists Group, which already has issued "Gist of Art," a combination of reminiscences and instruction by the veteran painter and etcher, John Sloan. It has also scheduled William Schack's biography of Eilshemius, the old "Mahatma" ("And He Sat Among the Ashes," November). Other volumes will follow.

In short, an incredible improvement has taken place in a short time. We are coming of age at last in our production of art books. True, we have not yet approximated the beautiful undertakings of old Vollard in his great books, say, on Rouault, or the Germans in the period before Hitler, in their "Kunsthistorische" series and many other publications. But we are going forward all the time. The advent of the war in Europe means that we shall continue this advance and undoubtedly take the leadership permanently from now on. Even greater victories, therefore, should be ours in the future.

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Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

ONE PHRASE of Winston Churchill's radio speech last Sunday vividly calls attention to a tremendous fact of the world situation: the revelation of Soviet Russia's key position. What Soviet Russia will do or will not do to help Hitler is still what Mr. Churchill terms "a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside of an enigma." Mr. Churchill is conspicuous among statesmen and among modern writers in English for his clarity of thought and his exactness in expression. Being up against the incomprehensible, he admitted his plight in his own picturesque language. In the only dictionary at hand, an abridged Webster, I find that "riddle" is defined as an "enigma." Turning to the word "enigma," I am merely told that it is a "riddle." Passing to "mystery," however, some little light is cast upon the problem of getting at the meaning, not so much of Mr. Churchill's words but of his main thought. "Mystery," says my dictionary, means "something secret, obscure or unexplained; that which is beyond human comprehension," with other more remote implications relating to the "mysteries" formerly taught in guilds of tradesmen or handicraftsmen, or the rites and ceremonies practiced in ancient secret societies, as at Eleusis. The "riddle" presented to British statecraft, and, of course, to the statecraft of all the nations involved or menaced by involvement in the war, is to guess what Russia means to do next, or ultimately; that riddle is indeed wrapped up in the "mystery" which is central to the whole system, the mystery which is communism itself; and that again, it would seem, is "inside an enigma"—inside the brain or the soul of one man, Josef Stalin. As many observers have pointed out, far less is really known about Stalin—about his character, his powers, his personal make-up—than about the other holders of vast political and military power such as Hitler and Mussolini. The same ignorance exists with regard to conditions inside Russia. How well prepared Russia may or may not be to supply Germany in the war with materials or arms or armies and what peril may exist to the present régime are likewise riddles within a mystery dominated by the enigmatic character of everything concerning Stalin and the Soviets. Certainly this commentator is far from believing that he is able to read such riddles and unveil such mysteries; nevertheless he is convinced that we of the outside world here in America, who so far are only indirectly, yet very tangibly, involved in the opening phases of the vast world struggle now impending, will be led astray in our thinking and planning if we concentrate too much attention upon the personalities who dominate the peoples already involved, Hitler and Stalin and Mussolini, and neglect the great movements among the masses of the peoples over whom they appear to rule with almost absolute irresponsibility. In other words, what Chesterton wrote in "Heretics," shortly before the outbreak of the first world war, is applicable again today. Speaking of the prevailing contempt among so-called practical men, politicians particularly, of general ideas—in other words of philosophy—he said that he thought that "for a general about to fight an enemy, it is important to know the enemy's numbers, but still more important to know the enemy's philosophy."

Mr. Churchill in his radio speech indicated one vast force existing among all peoples of the world which aided in producing communism and fascism and the Nazi movement and revolutions in many countries and distress and critical difficulties in all nations without exception. This phrase occurred in a passage dealing with Britain's war aims, but it will be even more cogent when the war runs its course and peace terms are discussed among the survivors. Mr. Churchill declared that he did not doubt the strength of England and France "to carry a good cause forward and to break down the barriers which stand between the wage-earning masses of every land and a free and more abundant life." It was precisely because all the nations of our modern age prior to the first world war had more or less failed to accomplish such a purpose that the world revolution began its course—even as Pope Leo XIII had solemnly warned the world would be the case if statesmen and business men and other leaders failed to heed the teaching of the Church. That problem still remains unsolved. The present war, whether short or long—in all probability it will be long indeed—can only result in increasing the acuteness of the economic problem, no matter who wins or loses in the physical fighting. Meanwhile for light upon the part that Russia is to play in the gigantic conflict daily becoming more acute, perhaps a gleam or two can be gained by considering what happened in Moscow in the spring of this year, at the eighteenth party congress of the Communists. Because of Stalin's foreign policy of soft-pedaling the activities of the Comintern and making great public play of the "Popular Front" movement, and the alliance with "democratic, anti-Fascist" forces everywhere, practically no attention was given by the world press to the proceedings of that congress in Moscow. Yet at that congress, as G. M. Godden points out in the London *Tablet* of August 26, 1939, in a documented article mostly consisting of translations from communist reports of the congress, it is abundantly evident that, whatever was said or done by Communists outside of Russia, within that enigmatic land the Communists themselves, led by Stalin, and his foreign minister Molotov and all other prominent leaders were rejoicing that a "new epoch" was dawning for their cause. In Stalin's own language, "an historic landmark" had been reached in the completion of the work of militant socialism in Russia itself, one-sixth part of the world, with its 170 millions, and now that vast population was prepared for "the march onward and upward of the complete triumph of communism." Speaker after speaker, uttering sentiments which could not have been made public unless Stalin, the mighty master of communism, approved, declared that the Soviets were entering upon a new phase of development, the cardinal feature of which would be the work of intensifying revolutionary progress among the working people of other countries. In regard to war, it was stated that of course working people would support a war "which will hasten the triumph of the proletariat of the world." How well these lessons of communistic doctrine are already being applied in con-

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quered Poland we know. Their extension elsewhere throughout the world is certain, and will be helped onward, war or no war, wherever social justice is denied.

Communications

HITLERISM

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I am wondering whether you are disposed to allowing a devil's advocate to cross the threshold of your magazine, provided he gives you assurance that his entire aim is to secure truth and justice. In the hope that you will be so lenient, I am posing this question for the consideration of your readers, "How dangerous is Hitlerism?"

The word, "Hitlerism," is a very recent coinage but it is important to find out what it means in view of the fact that England and France have publicly committed themselves (and maybe, indirectly, we are similarly committed) to fight till Hitlerism is dead.

It is logical that we should go directly to Hitler himself to find out what England is fighting. That England intends us to do just that is proved by the publication of the official Blue Book giving an account of the various interviews between Sir Neville Henderson and Hitler. From the New York *Times* for September 22 we learn that "the Ambassador was careful always to keep his government informed of Herr Hitler's mental state. In consequence his dispatches read at times like an alienist's report on an abnormal patient. They paint a picture of an erratic and unstable man alternating between periods of calm and spasms of abnormal violence."

Now roughly the idea here is that Hitler is insane. The problem would be considerably simplified if he were, because then every nation would have a way out of the conflict. It would be manifestly absurd to fight a world war against a single case of insanity. But the more probable explanation is that Hitler's excitement sprang from the fact that he was attempting to impress an imperturbable English aristocrat. It might be that Hitler was not so much insane as self-conscious, and it is possible that the Blue Book could be more rationally explained in these terms.

But if we assume that Hitler is a mental case, the new world war cannot be directed against him personally; nor against the German people. The one is insane; the other innocent. Consequently, the only thing we are left to fight against is "Hitlerism."

Now though "Hitlerism" would owe a great deal to Hitler, we would also expect to find in it some qualities purely German. Concerning this point, I said in a recent radio forum that the contention that it is our moral duty to combat Hitlerism seems to me to arise from the American tendency to view international affairs in a light of unjustified idealism. The facts in the case seem to be complex rather than simple and go well back into European history. Hitler is not an absolute; he is a symptom. You cannot fight Hitler without fighting the German people. I went on to point out that in the last war we were not fighting the German people, but the Kaiser's system of government. We shot the German people for their own good. But Hitlerism, it is implied, is something very special. Well, what is it?

Our State Department which is keeping nothing from us has never felt quite easy about Hitlerism. Nobody has. We rapped Germany sharply across the knuckles for permitting it, by recalling our ambassador from Berlin and by always assuming that she must be to blame for everything that happens. Apparently Hitlerism is a dynamic expanding force that is paradoxically building up an empire at the same time that it has no gold reserve. It is prepared to pay in terms of blood rather than cash. It has no particular respect for treaties. It is definitely undemocratic and wields the whole power of the state against any individual rash enough to oppose it. It has all the earmarks of the Prussian genius for organization and efficiency. There are plenty of reasons for our disliking it. But the question is, however, is it anything to go to war about either now or hereafter?

According to Colonel Lindbergh, whose judgment runs counter to the weight of propaganda in this country, we have no reason to fear it if we take proper precautions. Lindbergh is still prepared to regard Germany as within the pale of civilization and he differentiates Hitler from Jhengiz Khan.

Now it may be possible that our American sphere of interest is being threatened or will be threatened in the near future by Hitlerism; and that we should be sincerely grateful to the English and French for starting a crusade against it. But, nevertheless, as a prudent people, we should consider the possibility that Germany will be satisfied to be the great power she apparently is and content to devote her "dynamicism" to internal development. England would have to permit a neighboring star in her orbit, but that situation would not appear to be a total loss to civilization. Would it stretch the imagination too far to imagine Hitler not only as a brilliant opportunist but as a man who sincerely believes he has a mission; a pseudo-mystic who has overemphasized the meaning of race and blood but who, within the limitations of that fanaticism, is kindly disposed and anxious to accomplish something of lasting worth; a man unaware of the truth of Christianity but not more unaware of it than the imperialists of Russia, England or France; and a man no more likely to be anti-Christ than Napoleon, Wilhelm II, Clemenceau, Queen Victoria or any other person over-invested with brief authority?

If this is so, then the danger from Hitlerism depends not entirely upon its destructive urge but also upon what measure of good sense the rest of the world is prepared to extend to it. Is it too great a price to pay for peace to recognize Germany as a world power and let her have her *lebensraum?* That it will mean injustices is obvious. But is England or the United States in a position to throw stones? It is well to remember that other and more sinister forces are gathering that may forever seal the apparent supremacy of Anglo-Saxons, Americans and Germans. Motives in this case need thorough examination and we must be careful in our desire to stamp out Hitlerism not to stamp out Germany and ourselves.

WILLIAM J. GRACE.

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Points & Lines

Red, Altogether

AMONG non-fiction best-sellers "The Revolution of Nihilism," by Hermann Rauschning (Alliance Book Corporation. $3.00) appears on its way to the top of the list. Its publication in this country could hardly have been more opportune. *Time* says of the author:

> Son of a Prussian officer, himself trained in a military school, Rauschning is an East Prussian Junker who joined the Nazis in 1931 because he could see no other way out for Germany's desperation. He became President of the Danzig Senate, Hitler's go-between in his off-stage talks with Poland's late President Pilsudski. But when the Fuhrer ordered Rauschning to persecute Danzig Jews and Catholics, he quit the Nazis, took refuge in Poland, where he wrote his exposé.

Apparently the book is difficult to review in the usual way. For the critics appear too stunned by Rauschning's description of Nazi dynamism to do much more than quote sizable excerpts or summarize the author's views. The book was right down Dorothy Thompson's alley; it was the subject of three of her widely syndicated columns. Lewis Gannet said in the New York *Herald Tribune:*

> In a sense this book is a "Mein Kampf" revised and brought up to date. It is an analysis of the meaning of the Nazi revolution, to Germany and the world, in the light of six years' experience of power. In those six years Hitler himself has changed his mind, if that be the word for it; he has altered the direction of his instincts; and his movement has driven forward with an evolutionary movement of its own. . . . This is a revolution without doctrine, pursuing its own remorseless inner logic, the conquest of power for the men who constitute its self-elected élite. It is their principle to be without principles; the old Prussian code of honor means nothing to them. They will use any doctrine and reject it as readily to serve their own explosive purposes.

A stark summary of the author's contentions is presented in the Salt Lake City *Tribune:*

> Nihilism means the destruction of Christianity and all the things for which it stands, its code of ethics, morality, belief in God and all Christian sentiments. It means the annihilation of western civilization as we know it.

The Boston *Herald* is one of those who are convinced:

> This appraisal of the Nazis, although supported by many commonly known facts, would not be so convincing were it not for Herr Rauschning's shrewd diagnosis of Hitler's foreign policy and his even more remarkable prognosis—as proved by events occurring since the writing of the book . . .: "A German-Russian alliance means simply the confluence of two streams which run toward the same sea, the sea of world revolution. . . . The Nazi régime is now the prisoner of its own system of domination. It can no more dispense with its pursuit of hegemony than with its government by violence at home."

The end result of all this may have its encouraging aspects, according to the author, who bases some hope on the possibility that the German Army may wrest control of the situation from Hitler. The other alternative seems more likely, according to T. R. Ybarra in the New York *Times:*

> Dr. Rauschning is convinced that the destructive movement led by Hitler carries within it the seeds of its own destruction. Though he believes that the Nazi lust for domination, far from being confined to Europe, seeks to conquer the entire universe—not excepting America, where some of its champions envisage a revolution that will nazify our country—he foresees for it (on account of its impaired nihilism) no prospect of ultimate triumph.

The fact that the author was once a sincere Nazi makes him go to the heart of things as few other exiles have succeeded in doing. To cite Toni Stolper in the *Saturday Review of Literature:*

> It may surprise the reader that this message seems to pass by all points of the usual criticism of Nazism. Neither the Jew-baiting, nor the terror perpetrated in concentration camps and by the Gestapo, nor the alleged reactionary, pro-capitalistic function which Marxists still try to pin on National Socialism, is at the center of Rauschning's criticism. He does not, however, evade any one of these points. The simple sentence, "No believing Christian and no humane-minded person can be anti-Semitic" very tersely defines his own position. And he goes on to state that the destruction of Germany Jewry is only one element in the destruction of Christianity, at which he sees the present German developments aimed. But it becomes clear from the book what unfortunately has been so much obscured by the horror the Jewish refugee problem has raised in the world, that National Socialism would offer just as much of an international problem if by some feat of the imagination this whole Jewish chapter could be eliminated.

As intimated before, Dr. Rauschning places whatever hopes he has in the return of the Junker class to power. So much for Germany. His prescription for the world in general is summarized by Elizabeth Wiskemann in the London *Spectator:*

> For his part, Dr. Rauschning believes the only solution for the world to lie in the determined restoration of the rule of law in place of the license of force. He regards domination as, in fact, *démodé*, and like the American writer, Mr. Clarence Streit, he cries out for international federation at the expense of the bloated dimensions of the power of the sovereign State of today.

George Shuster's article about the German edition of the book (THE COMMONWEAL, May 19) contained the following statement of the problem:

> When one confronts National Socialism in action, therefore, one is not merely face to face with a personal dictator or a tyrant. If that were all, then of course the death of the tyrant would solve the problem. But Hitler is the sinister creator of a revolution which is more properly a synthesis—of the old Pan-German militaristic imperialism with the new economic dependence of the individual.

The big question is what the United States should do about the movement described by Dr. Rauschning. One suggestion comes from the *Churchman* (Episcopalian):

> It's all part of the carefully thought out technique but it is all a little too diabolical for us to believe easily. It seems a little too much like scenes from a Bellevue ward. Yet it is the portrait of actuality. This is the problem which faces the world today in such acute manifestation, a problem which concerns every American and every Christian. The genius who can solve it has not yet appeared. But wishful thinking, and the attitude of the ostrich, will not bring the solution. Nor will an America dragged into war by the "we-can't-keep-out" crowd already vocal.

Eric Axelrod in the Dallas, Texas, *News* makes a plea that should have a wider hearing:

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> Regardless of the fact that the World War set loose an anti-social nihilistic element which unfortunately had its manifestation on German soil, we must bring a little pity and understanding to the crucial situation in Germany at present. For, after all, it is only through this pity that western civilization may bring intelligence and tolerance to the aid of a stricken people. And the case at hand demands of the democracies just that combination of educated forceful political realism and Christian pity. Hermann Rauschning has given us a working basis for that understanding and we may now pray that hatred engendered by war will not obliterate charity.

Red Meat and Red Herrings

IN prose fiction the big book of the year has been John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath." Published April 16, by the last week of September the publisher, Viking, could count 227,000 sales. When a book sells like that, and when it causes the comment and controversy this book has, it becomes a cultural phenomenon of important dimensions. The literary and critical industry of the country is not really geared to handle it. The number of genuine ideas expressed in connection with the novel are humiliatingly few.

A thumbing over of reviews shows that excitement and enthusiasm fairly possessed most professional reviewers and more articulate American intellectuals in general. Marquis W. Childs represents a very wide reaction (writing for the Washington Sunday *Star*):

> Like the story of Uncle Tom which stirred a whole generation of readers before the Civil War, the Steinbeck novel has already become one of the most talked of books of our time. . . . Just as the earlier novel stirred a profound sympathy for the Negro slaves, so has the Steinbeck book aroused an interest in the problem of the landless farmer. . . . "The Grapes of Wrath" has had a measurable, practical effect, and particularly here in Washington. The Farm Security Administration, the federal agency responsible for the migratory workers in California, was the only relief agency to get a larger appropriation out of Congress than the Bureau of the Budget recommended. . . . Several million readers of this angry, bitter, moving, harshly realistic novel may mean the creation of a solid body of public opinion. Another Congress may discover pressure for a large scale solution of this tragedy.

With the official Communists the book went very well. Joseph Davis wrote for the *Daily Worker:*

> No reader can fail to agree that it is a magnificent story of our time . . . a beautiful and authentic account. . . . It is hard to think of a more thoroughly satisfying proletarian novel in America.

The *Nation* and *New Republic* were somewhat more restrained than this, and also than most of the "bourgeois" and "non-political" publications. Louis Kronenberger said more than most critics when reviewing for the *New Republic:*

> One comes away moved, indignant, protesting, pitying. . . . But one comes away dissatisfied, too, aware that "The Grapes of Wrath" is too unevenly weighted, too uneconomically proportioned, the work of a writer who is still self-indulgent, still undisciplined, still not altogether aware of the difference in value of various human emotions. The picturesqueness of the Joads, for example, is fine wherever it makes them live more abundantly, but false when simply laid on for effect. Steinbeck's sentimentalism is good in bringing him close to the lives of his people, but bad when it blurs his insight. . . . But one does not take leave of a book like this in a captious spirit. . . . It is, I think, one of those books—there are not very many—which really do some good.

Not only Marx-tending readers and publications considered the book terrific. Herbert Agar felt:

> The book is so fascinating and so fearful that I expect it will become a best-seller. . . . For whoever submits himself to this book will not find it easy to forget. . . . The book is so true that in addition to being great art it is great sociology.

Three elements in the book roused particular controversy: the dirty language and occasional dirty passages; the "assault on individualism" and our present economic structure; in the third place, "a rather vague form of pantheism and a bitter attack on that emotional evangelistic religion which seems to thrive in the more impoverished rural districts of this vast country [COMMONWEAL]." In various places the book was banned, the Kansas City Public Library, for instance. When it was very bitterly attacked or banned, the question always arose: was it because of its protest against exploitation, or because of its occasional dirtiness or inadequate religious outlook? *America* commented:

> As regards obscene books the situation will be bound to solve itself without the aid of a censorship board if the reactions to John Steinbeck's latest novel, "The Grapes of Wrath," can be taken as a criterion of how public sentiment can be outraged. The Associated Farmers of Kern County, Cal., a rather hard-boiled lot, we fancy, are organizing to outlaw Steinbeck's book as not only a "smear" on the good name of Kern, Cal., but on the good name of agriculture in general. And Westbrook Pegler, who has certainly been around and heard things in the course of his checkered newspaper career, says of "The Grapes of Wrath": "This book contains the dirtiest language that I have ever seen on paper." When hard-boiled literature becomes too hard-boiled even for the hard-boiled, then it is probably time for censorship committees to indulge in a well earned vacation. Incidentally, there is a lesson to be learned from these unexpected outbreaks which Catholics cannot afford to ignore, since it squares so completely with our explanation of man. Human nature is refined, even under the layers of actual and original sin.

Heywood Broun stepped into a battle when he discussed the subject in his *New Republic* column.

> I have yet to see a single critic make any mention of the fact that John Steinbeck lays it on pretty thick in "The Grapes of Wrath." I hold no card of membership in the critics' circle and so I may state timidly that I think he does. Nor will I willingly accept the indictment that any such opinion indicates that I am drifting to the right. I do not see a necessary connection between proletarian literature and some set percentage of words which bring the blushes to a maiden's cheek. Of course, I respect the complete integrity of Steinbeck's artistic sincerity. Indeed I think "The Grapes of Wrath" is a novel of great significance, and one cannot write of misery and men crushed to the ground without having access to words that are earthy. But at times I think a kind of phoniness creeps in.

Mrs. Roosevelt read the book:

> Now I must tell you that I have just finished a book which is an unforgettable experience in reading. "The Grapes of Wrath," by John Steinbeck, both repels and attracts you. The horrors of the picture, so well drawn, make you dread sometimes to begin the next chapter, and yet you cannot lay the book down or even skip a page. Somewhere I saw the criticism that this book was anti-religious, but some-

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how I cannot imagine thinking of "Ma" without at the same time thinking of the love "that passeth all understanding." The book is coarse in spots, but life is coarse in spots, and the story is very beautiful in spots, just as life is. . . .

In Oklahoma, where the unfortunate Joad family started their miserable trip West, many papers objected. For example, the Altus, Okla., *Times-Democrat* says:

> A lot has been written about John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath" and we will not undertake to compete with the highbrow critics who have pronounced it swell literature. It may be. . . . The book is now in its seventh printing so we must be all wrong when we say it's lousy and 95 per-cent trash. . . .

California was split, with the major part of its press apparently antagonistic. Thus the San Bernardino *Sun*:

> California again receives a bit of unfavorable publicity on a situation not of its own making in a book, "The Grapes of Wrath," written by John Steinbeck. . . . The fallacy of this should hardly be dignified by denial, it is so preposterous. . . . We think author Steinbeck is guilty of the very thing of which he accuses California—that of false statement and holding up to these migrants a condition which does not exist, solely for the purpose of making money.

The *East Bay Labor Journal* of Oakland claims:

> John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath," a terrific exposure of the inhuman treatment of migratory workers by California employers, has fallen under the ban of the so-called "Associated Farmers," a blind for the worst labor baiters in the state. The organization has launched a campaign to block the sale of the book. It has met with some success.

The San Francisco *Examiner* reports on the "Associated Farmers," and quotes their executive secretary:

> "California as a whole expects to capitalize upon the widespread interest in the Steinbeck deal, in order to focus national attention on the real nationwide migrant problem which to date has not receive enough attention." . . . Describing the Steinbeck best seller as a distortion of facts by a writer of doctrines which would "incite hatred and eventually lead to the support of subversive activities," the committee made the same criticism of the McWilliams book ["Factories in the Fields"] with the additional statement it was based on the findings of "alleged authorites."

After these charges and claims have been noticed, it may be interesting to see what the *Junior League Magazine*, published very near Park Avenue in New York, has to say:

> If you don't read "The Grapes of Wrath," you will have to find a special fancy alibi for yourself, and I cannot think of one that will be very convincing. Fast and exciting as "Gone with the Wind," raw and brutal as "Tobacco Road," tough and vivid with first-hand knowledge, it is no book for those who like to feel that the connotations of the American Way are all upright, sturdy, pleasing. I have faults to find with it. I think, for instance, that the second half of the book tackles a difficult problem with spotty success. I think also that despite the very unpretty trimmings with which he drapes all his characters impartially, the author indulges in certain painful moments of sentimentality. But to shield oneself from the wrathful lightnings of his vision under any pretext would certainly be a far greater and more foolish error than any he has committed. . . . It is a tricky problem for today's left-wing writers to get dialectics and the country people together without destroying the arguments of the first or the reality of the second—a problem not artistically solved by suddenly giving the people the gift of tongues. It is my impression that in a pinch they are more ready to sacrifice the intactness of the character than that of the political "line," and I would say that in this manner Mr. Steinbeck does conspicuous violence to his laborers on more than one occasion.

The Stage & Screen

See My Lawyer

"SEE MY LAWYER" is a George Abbott play, although it is written by Richard Maibum and Harry Clork. There have been plays which Mr. Abbott has produced which haven't borne the Abbott stamp, but they have been very few. That stamp is easily recognizable. The Abbott play has pace, swift change of mood, immense physical action, an artificial but amusing story, an abundance of wisecracks, no charm or poetry and little psychological reality. Yet at its best the Abbott play makes an amusing, often even an exhilarating, evening. "See My Lawyer" has its amusing moments, though it is not an Abbott of the first water. It is a little too confused and unreal, though its wisecracks and the speed of the acting are as effective as usual. It would be useless to try to tell the story. It is enough to say it has to do with a goofy millionaire playboy who hires three impecunious lawyers to keep him out of trouble, and gets mixed up with the girl of one of them. The dialogue, except for two or three lines, is devoid of offense. Though it is not Abbott at his best, it may very well have an excellent run, for it probably costs little to produce and will cause laughter at a time when laughter is indeed needed. The acting and Ezra Stone's direction are excellent. Milton Berle is not perhaps an ideal young lover, but he is workmanlike, and Millard Mitchell, Mary Rolfe, Teddy Hart, Norman Tokar, Ralph Bell and Eddie Nugent play with raciness and agility. And a young woman named Robin Raymond gives a vital and colorful enactment of a chorus girl on the make. *(At the Biltmore Theatre.)*

The Straw Hat Review

I FOUND this revue, aside from a few lapses in taste and two or three rather dull numbers, refreshing. It has an amateur enthusiasm which raises it out of the rut of Broadway musicals, and yet is possesses enough professional polish and efficiency to keep that enthusiasm in effective form. And then it has the inimitable Imogene Coca. Miss Coca is an American Beatrice Lillie, that is, she is more so. Whether as a tramp, a comic opera star of the old style, or as a reimbodiment of Carmen Miranda singing the "South American Way," she is tops. Indeed I am not at all sure if she doesn't prove even more Miranda-ish than Miranda. Miss Coca is a clown, a soubrette and an imaginative artist. She is one of the most talented performers on the American stage. But Miss Coca is not alone. She is admirably assisted by Danny Kaye, by James Shelton, by Meta Mata and Otto Hari, by Alfred Drake, by Maude Davis and by as talented and good looking a set of singer-dancers as New York has seen in many a moon. The music and lyrics of Sylvia Fine and James Shelton are excellent, if not particularly original, and Max Liebman has done an excellent job of the staging. On the whole "The Straw Hat Review" is one of the pleasantest musicals of the last twelve months. And the finale of the

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first act is the best thing of its kind I've seen in years. *(At the Ambassador Theatre.)* GRENVILLE VERNON.

No Discharge in the War

NOT TO BE CAUGHT napping, Hollywood rushes to the fore with war films. RKO was all set at the beginning of September with its smoothly directed, well-acted, semi-documentary about "Nurse Edith Cavell." Warner Brothers hurried with "Espionage Agent" to warn movie-goers that America needs better counter-espionage. Now MGM crashes through with "Thunder Afloat," which emphasizes to the tune of "Anchors Aweigh" the courageous work that the 1918 Naval Reserve did in submarine chasers. Dragging in the usual fiction about the bickerings of two men o' the sea, Wallace Beery and Chester Morris, and Virginia Grey, the pretty-faced daughter of the former who flits in and out of the story, the film is noteworthy for its fine scenes of the fleet in action. Director George B. Seitz, making the most of the Navy's loan of 500 sub-chasers, has turned out a tremendously exciting sea picture.

The other companies, having no new war pictures ready, are releasing old ones. Monogram provides a stimulating and exhausting hour with "The Fight for Peace." Although the script is dated, incomplete and occasionally unsound, the pictures themselves, made up of old newsreels and other documentary sources, are really something to see—especially historic shots of George V, the Kaiser, the Czar, Lenin, Trotsky, Wilson, the World War, the alarming piling up of armaments since that eleventh hour on the eleventh day of the eleventh month when men thought the war to end wars was ended, the rise of Mussolini, Hitler, the horror wars in Ethiopia, Spain and China and Roosevelt delivering the "America hates war" speech.

Lest you miss any little point of irony, a commentator now makes pithy remarks on "All Quiet on the Western Front," which Universal considers its "sacred duty" to release. Obvious anti-Hitler propaganda is tied to the film through scenes showing the Remarque novel being burned by the Nazis. That "All Quiet" stands up so well after nine years is due principally to Lewis Milestone's direction, the Maxwell Anderson-George Abbott script and Erich Maria Remarque's sincerity in debunking war. Although sentimental at times, the film still has terrific force in its argument against war's futility as you see these German youngsters piling out of schoolrooms for the fatherland, becoming disillusioned, being wasted.

Among the new offerings, *not* war films, are such tidbits as "What a Life!" made from Clifford Goldsmith's pleasant comedy about high-school life, nicely acted by Jackie Cooper as Henry who always gets into trouble, genuinely charming Betty Field who likes Henry and Vaughan Glaser, the principal. Parents should see this. "Rio," with Sigrid Gurie, Victor McLaglen, Robert Cummings, tries to lift itself out of the cheap melodrama class, but can't make the grade. Basil Rathbone's leanings toward ham must be blamed on the script about a corrupt financier who lands in a French penal colony and expects his wife to wait. Poetic flights of fancy don't help. "Pearls like angels' tears," indeed! PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Critical and Familiar

By KATHERINE BRÉGY

A MIND as interesting—because as closely in touch with both scholarship and the human qualities—as that of Fru Undset can scarcely fail to create interesting work in whatever medium it chooses to use. So it is not surprising that when the author whose novels have already achieved (and deserved!) the coveted Nobel Prize turns to the essay, she should again score heavily.*

And the present collection is one of extraordinary diversity. The subjects travel all the way from sensitively historical memories of old Glastonbury to a discussion of blasphemy which turns into a humorous but devastating arraignment of spiritism and other chatty forms of modern supernaturalism. Reviews of a few worth-while but unfamiliar German and Danish novelists are preceded by a study of D. H. Lawrence almost unique in that it contrives to be at once sympathetic and critical where practically every other interpretation of this unhappy genius has been either uncritical or unsympathetic. And certainly one of the most arresting essays in the volume concerns itself with the little known fifteenth-century burgess's wife, Dame Margery Kempe of Lynn: a vital, stormy, adventurous and at times hysterical woman whose recently discovered autobiography proves her to have been also a sincere mystic. It was like Sigrid Undset, with her clear understanding of the paradoxes of the soul and the seeming contradictions of character, to have recreated this woman, who might quite validly have claimed as "sisters under the skin" Lady Juliana of Norwich on one side and on the other the Wife of Bath!

In the Norwegian convert's description of "Summer in Gotland" we come upon a thousand archeological traces of medieval Scandinavian Christianity—and one exquisitely suggestive sentence of autobiography: "In all the years when I did not know what to believe in and therefore preferred to leave all belief alone, whenever I came to a place where living water welled up, blessedly cold and sweet and pure, from the earth's dark bosom, I felt that after all it must be wrong not to believe in anything." And American readers—especially COMMONWEAL readers—may well thank her for bringing back, in a long essay most suitably entitled "Cavalier," something of the work and the personality of Henry Longan Stuart. In fact it is apropos of his tragic and often misunderstood novel, *Weeping Cross*, that Fru Undset accuses American Catholics of being "infected by the puritanical system of suppression—which is entirely un-Catholic. The system, that is, which assumes that Christian virtues are best protected if we pretend to know nothing of the dangers that threaten them." The charge is not any less challenging because one recognizes that it grew all too directly from the author's own experience as a novelist; and to the present reviewer it seems quite patent that this particularly stultifying germ of Puritanism began to take heavy toll of Cath-

* "Men, Women and Places," by Sigrid Undset. Translated from the Norwegian by Arthur G. Chater. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

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olic readers at just about the time it was losing hold upon the emancipated grandchildren of the Puritans themselves. Or was it, perhaps, largely because some of these over-emancipated apostles of "naturalism" and literary "liberty" went—as usual—to the other extreme? The question of candor in fiction must always be one for delicate weighing, with geography or chronology often tipping the scales. But the distinction between ignorance and innocence remains an essential one; and adult readers can no more expect than adult writers can produce what Cardinal Newman profoundly described as a "sinless literature of sinful man." Is it not true that the elemental difference between a Christian and a pagan work of art would lie not in the subject matter but in the emphasis and viewpoint?

These Undset rambles follow one of the most delightful traditions of the essay in being at the same time critical and familiar—and they can hardly fail to draw attention once again to the conspicuous fact of Catholic supremacy in this particular field of literature. They have the standards and the mellowness which come from long experience of the past applied very vitally to the problems of the present—in other words, the brooding sense of continuity and of eternity. And as with all the best essays, their most intriguing quality is the freshness of personal observation and reaction brought to play upon impersonal subject matter. "Digressions are the sunshine—they are the life, the soul of reading," observed that wise old humorist, Laurence Sterne. And if wit, the sunshiny flash of word and thought, is not precisely characteristic of Sigrid Undset's highly serious style, imagination emphatically is. Through its far, deep reaches her digressions often become the very kernel of the nut. For only an author of genius can start off with a history of the trial of Charles I, only to end with a fiery plea for supernatural energy, and the clarion call: "Unless our natural goodness and our natural, unstable love of truth are penetrated by *that* love and *that* truth which are synonyms of the Creator's power, we shall nevertheless fall victims to one or other of the seven deadly sins. And the seventh and last is the worst—*accidia,* sloth."

The satisfying English translation and beautiful bookmaking added to "Men, Women and Places" make it altogether one of the superlative volumes of the autumn harvest.

More Books of the Week

America Lives

The Heritage of America, by Henry Steele Commager and Allen Nevins. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. $4.00.

MUCH OF HISTORY, it has been observed, is a conspiracy agreed upon. In a sense this is true of American history. It has, I mean, been a conspiracy against the reader. There are many reasons for this. It has been true partly because historians as a lot are a timorous crowd, and, secondly, because they suffer from academic snobbery.

The conspiracy has, until recently, obtained. The general reader has been told about documents. He may, even, have been beguiled or mentally pulverized by the academic paraphernalia known as footnotes. He may have heard or

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read of sources—primary or secondary. But he seldom, if ever, was given any. Access to them involved a slow, painful and often profitless existence called academic training. For the historian had a vested right in his business and the mob could hardly be allowed initiation into arcana. Often, the fact is, historians have written for each other.

But at long last two of our best and most prolific historians have, in that deliciously feminine phrase, let down their hair. They have not written a history of America nor given us a collection of documents. They have left the observers—the soldiers who fought; the politicians who conspired or did good; the men who built and the men who wrecked; the men who were desperate, and the men who hoped; the women (those incredible ancestors of ours) who dreamed and loved and made homes, and often watched them fired and burn; the discoverers; the men who hanged witches; the men who rebelled; the men who boiled whole or the women who, last year, were WPA investigators—all these these historians have let tell their stories to us directly—in first-hand narratives. And all this without benefit of historical interruption called interpretation and analysis.

Make no mistake about it. The pens of this motley group—these makers of history—have created a vital and amazing historical literature. This is the Heritage of America. And no book like this exists among our mighty stream of books. For these two historians have brought this literature to us for the first time. And they have produced a work of high intelligence and absorbing interest.

Mr. Commager and Mr. Nevins are college professors. But they are unusual among their tribe. They know—for they tell us—that "history is not a matter of libraries but of life; the best of it is not stiffly second-hand, but is matter pulsing with hopes and despairs, the ardors and endurances, the joys and sorrows of plain people everywhere."

This book opens with a description of Leif Ericson's voyage to Vineland and closes with Whitman's hymn—"Sail, Sail Thy Best, Ship of Democracy." In between are crowded into 1,100 pages narratives from the Journal of Columbus to Evalyn Walsh McLean's account of the Bonus Army, as she saw it in the days of Mr. Hoover. Contemporary pen-portraits of our founding fathers, accounts of conventions and inaugurations, selections from Howells and Dickens, Melville and Twain—all are here. No part of American life as seen by participants and observers is left untouched. Each selection is given as it originally appeared. None there is that does not absorb us.

Here is our heritage as told by the people who lived it. Here is the work to revel in—here the book to ponder and return to; here the book for pride and joy and critical sadness. Here we return to our origins, watch our development, our wars, our peace, our retrogression and advancement. Here a Southerner owner runs a model plantation. And here his daughter portrays for us how the same post-war Thomas Dabney does the family wash. We learn what it was like to be a slave; what it was like below decks on a slave ship. What was it to be an American? Is it different in 1939 from what it was in 1782? Crèvecoeur then wrote: "To what purpose should they ask one another what countrymen they are? Alas, two-thirds of them had no country. Urged by a variety of motives, here they came. Everything has tended to regenerate them. New laws, a new mode of living, a new social system. Here they are become men."

We can follow Arnold to Quebec and Clark to Kaskaskia while rain is relentless and swamps ooze; live the frenetic rush for gold or wake at down, hear cattle bellowing, fear the Sioux, and ride the trail to Oregon. Harriet Martineau finds a working girls' paradise in 1834 and a hundred years after Louise Armstrong sketches scenes of quiet desperation in an Emergency Relief Office. It is good for us today, too, to read what Wilson, about to fight, knew of war; to know that Frederic Howe could see in 1918 a fruit of war we, too, might know: "There was a concerted determination on the part of employers to bring wages back to pre-war conditions and to break the power of organized labor."

This is a truly wonderful book. It defies description and review. It must be read—slowly and lovingly. It is illuminating and delightful, fascinating and instructive. It is a remarkable work. Scarcely less remarkable is the fact that, until now, we have had to get along without it.

FRANCIS DOWNING.

BIOGRAPHY

Saint John Chrysostom: the Voice of Gold, by Donald Attwater. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company. $2.00.

SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM lived and flourished at the end of the fourth century during a time of troubles which could match in sharpness even those of today. He died an exile, a refugee from an autocratic government, forced from one outpost of civilization to a still more removed and dangerous one. He was blocked and harassed and never able to bring the difference between himself and his enemies to a clear and recognized issue so that justice could be seen to bring the clean judgment. His victory was laggard, but great; for now the Byzantine Church numbers him with Saint Basil the Great and Saint Gregory Nazianzen as Holy Hierarch and Universal Teacher, and these three, together with Saint Athanasius make the four great Greek doctors of the Western Church.

Chrysostom was a preacher and bishop, a man of intense activity and feeling, and it is not simple to present him to a contemporary reader. The times have to be given as well as the man, because as a man active in the world, his reactions cannot be understood at all unless we can see something of the scene to which he reacted. He was not a great theologian or abstract thinker and he worked in no religious order—things which preserve themselves from the times. He was, indeed, immersed in his age, and it was precisely in redeeming a very specific time that he was holy and heroic.

Mr. Attwater, one of the real historians of the period and place, does extremely well in giving the whole picture in a short volume. He keeps the work in hand and easily readable by refraining from going off on tangents and by focussing carefully on the protagonist. The most interested readers, however, who can claim no great knowledge of the Constantinople of Arcadius and Theodosius II, may well feel the work is too concise and may wish that it were longer and digressions more numerous.

The state of the Church and the Empire from 344 to 407 is something worth study. The Church had become officially established and had not yet matured in that condition. The external suffering it had undergone was succeeded by even more disheartening inner suffering. The Eastern Empire was changing into Byzantium and the

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West was being overrun by barbarians. Culture, politics, economics were universally unstable. The people were in a state of mind it is difficult to grasp. The connotations of the word, "Byzantine," were growing, while at the same time and antithetically, Christianity was receiving classic Catholic expression. Chrysostom reflects the almost febrile quality of his environment and was also a great doctor in making firm the classic. When time was, like today, spinning, he exerted heroic will for the timeless. To do it required first an appreciation—indeed, a sympathy amounting to participation—for the restless, transient, nervous and kind-of-crazy (as we know it well) motion of people, and a real violence of faith and will and charity to meet it with charitable, religious stability. Saint Chrysostom's whole tensely alive being was in the struggle.

Donald Attwater writes with sympathy and comprehension, if at times it seems a removed objectivity, of that time of desperate trouble, when corruption, avarice and violence (against which, without sparing persons, Chrysostom preached in words of gold) were met and conquered by a whole army of saints. It is not "pious" hagiography, but vigorous, realistic biography which shows that triumphs are triumphs because they overcome real difficulties and inclinations. Humanity, the human members and governors of the Church, and the human person of a great saint are not deprived of their humanness to display their supernatural. The book by no means reads like a scholarly treatise either, although it embodies the careful learning accumulated by the author over many years of study of the Church in the East. It is an excellent addition to Bruce's "Science and Culture Series."

PHILIP BURNHAM.

Arthur Rimbaud, by Enid Starkie. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. $3.75.

THIS is a fuller, more nearly definitive biography of Rimbaud than any available up to now. It is written for those who are not perturbed by the ultimate in physical and moral misery. Rimbaud was a great poet momentarily; he was always a wretched and unhappy man—and Miss Starkie has been obliged not only to clarify the poetry wherever it can be clarified, but also to lay bare the extent of the poet's depravity. She has done us the service of sparing no detail, of hunting down even the last and least with the detached accuracy of the trained historian. After all, it is not her fault if her reader feels that he has just watched an immaculate surgeon open a particularly noisome ulcer!

Following an unnamed traumatic experience at the hands of soldiers during the war of 1870, which time the naïve youth had chosen to arrive in Paris in search of fortune, Rimbaud distinguished himself as the most visibly maladjusted genius in French literature. His frantic researches in occult philosophy had convinced him that his salvation lay in his ability to identify himself with God. To this end poetry was to be his instrument, and his method of breaking down the framework of ordinary reality was to be systematic debauch. Even then he was writing great poetry. Miss Starkie's effort is spent largely in showing how his poems record the stages of his peculiar mystical experience. The unhappy series which culminates in the *Bateau ivre* she ties neatly to the inception of the experiment; the *Illuminations*, to its ecstatic height; the *Saison en enfer* to his realization of failure and defeat.

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One of the founders of the rapidly expanding Association of Catholic Trade Unionists discusses Father Bruehl's important book, "The Pope's Plan for Social Reconstruction." Mr. Cort considers it "a major contribution to the growing literature of Christian social reconstruction" and tells why.

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For both instrument and method let him down. Rimbaud hated the abominations he forced himself to practice, and when he found that they brought him nearer hell than heaven, he gave up poetry. He did not renounce it, but, after the years of vagabondage on the Somali coast, of trading and gun-running and even slave-trading, he had time only to die. Equally far from literature and from the slough of dope, alcohol and anomalous sexuality of his years in Paris, Rimbaud found peace, perhaps, but not poetry.

This was the man to whom Claudel says he owes his conversion to the Church, and to whom modern literature owes many of its directions. Miss Starkie does full justice to the drama and pathos and pathology of his life.

W. M. FROHOCK.

Autobiography, by A. A. Milne. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. $3.00.

THERE is no writer of our time who has achieved success with more dignity, integrity and desert than has Mr. Milne. He belongs to that small but precious nucleus of high-principled, witty, solid Englishmen whose existence and efforts in all periods of English history have justified their country. This book is worth reading, for it is a real book and an honest one. As essayist, humorist, playwright, its author has many admirers; his detective story, "The Red House Mystery," ranks among the classics of that type of writing, and there is no need to stress the popularity of "Christopher Robin," "Wninie the Pooh" and his other books for children.

If you like Mr. Milne's way of doing things, and I do, you will like his "Autobiography." It is not the ordinary sort of thing; it has warmth and humanity, its author is not too intellectual to be tender, and its tone is almost self-deprecatory. The introduction opens, "When I read the biography of a well-known man, I find that it is the first half of it which holds my attention. I watch with fascinated surprise the baby, finger in mouth, grow into the politician, tongue in cheek; but I find nothing either fascinating or surprising in the discovery that the cynicism of the politician has matured into the pomposity of the Cabinet Minister." Acting on this principle, Mr. Milne has sought to recapture not alone the incidents of his childhood and youth, but the atmosphere of what was to him a very happy time; the memory of his parents, his schools, his days at the university. Perhaps the most interesting parts of the story are those which concern the author's father, a man who might well have formed the stuff of a delightful novel. There was a strong bond between the author and his family, particularly with his older brother and companion, Ken. One might almost say that the earlier half of the book is told in terms of Ken.

When Mr. Milne turns to a discussion of his work, he permits himself no pose. He is professional, pragmatic, amused. He is satisfied if his peers and his public consider him a good workman who has given them the best he had. There is a very clever analysis of the play, "The Truth About Blayds," given as a sample of his method of playwriting. He has many wise, down to earth observations to make on the subject of writing. There is little or no discussion of his contemporaries, no old scores paid off and no exposés. Mr. Milne is artist enough to feel that this book is history and not a cultural or social history of his time. On page 282, gently but firmly he punctures the pretensions of Dorothy Parker on the occasion of one of her more deplorable lapses.

J. G. E. HOPKINS.

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CRITICISM

The Sudden Rose, an Essay on the Unity of Art, by Blanche Mary Kelly. New York: Sheed and Ward. $2.00.

MOST OF THE fascicles which comprise this series of reflections upon the deeper significance of esthetics are excellent: that man has an inner craving which finds manifestation and solace in the fine arts; that he naturally admires the good and the great and is inescapably drawn to the beautiful and the true; that the enjoyment of evil is a distortion, hence that the artist cannot dismiss morals as irrelevant; that the greatest artists have been concerned with the ideal. It is a relief to find once again the insistence that there is no worth in the debased and the grotesque, or in the artificial or the tawdry; to read the healthy attack on the Lawrence-Farrell schools in literature; the Cézanne-Gaugin voice in art; the Landseer and Ethelbert Nevin monstrosities in the parlor and music room. It is important, in an age of radio, to take the stand that without a proper understanding of the arts, men are barred from an approach to beauty; that an art-conscious populace is likely to be an intelligent one; that more folowers are necessary of that Pope and that Swift who warned against "universal night" seeking with her chaotic hand to raze the best which civilization has set up.

The viewpoint throughout, as would be expected of the author of "The Well of English," is that of the romanticist. As a result, any attempt of an artist to convert his reader to a point of view is considered a flaw—which excludes all the didactic literature of the middle ages. Humor, put into an alliance with humility, is made the exclusive property of the Christian—which rules out Aristophanes and those who walked in his satiric steps. It is denied that art is produced according to rules—which makes for cloudiness in the discussion of tradition.

Finally, the main tenet of the study is this: Christianity, as the revelation of eternal truth, is the greatest religion, that which brings man nearest to the beauty and goodness which are associated with God. Art is the expression of man's attempt to represent the beautiful and the true, is a manifestation of man's passion for the divine. Therefore, the greatest art is that which is basically and avowedly Christian, i.e., Catholic. This is splendidly religious—and the treatment of religious art is excellent throughout the study—but as a system of esthetics it is guilty at least of over-simplification.

JAMES E. TOBIN.

Art from the Mayans to Disney, by Jean Charlot. New York: Sheed and Ward. $2.00.

A POSTSCRIPT to this book states that the text is "made up of collected articles published from 1923 to the present. Those dealing with Mexico have been translated by the author from the original Spanish. . . ." The articles range from an excellent discussion of Mayan art and its relation to the American scene, through to an interesting account of the work of Rivera, Orosco and Siqueiros and the difficulties encountered by these artists; and end with a chapter devoted to a "Disney Disquisition." This is perhaps the most interesting chapter of all, insofar as it treats of a subject that has seldom been handled by a painter. The advent of the Disney movies heralded a welcome and much needed change, and as Charlot writes: "The new subject-matter illustrates the sharp cleft between our rationalism and our imaginative urge." It is because the Disney comics are modeled strictly along the

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lines of *function* that this function results in a beauty peculiarly its own.

It may be true that there is no mystery in art and that it is one of the simplest things on earth, but the beholder who lacks training and whose understanding of art must be based on clear expression on the part of the artist can profitably read the author's chapter on "The Critic, the Artist and Problems of Representation." Although Charlot's phraseology in this chapter is a bit complex, it serves to indicate that the apparent simplicity of art contains a paradoxical complexity which can only be met with a sympathetic attitude on the part of the beholder.

In the welter of art criticism with which we are daily confronted it is likely that we will forget the achievements of artists whose work is of a peculiarly personal nature, and Charlot's comments on such artists as Louis M. Eilshemus, Edward Weston, Henrietta Shore, Franklin C. Watkins and Ben Shahn should be welcomed by those of us who are unaware of their existence. And it is well that their work is recalled to us by an artist rather than by a professional art critic, and particularly by an artist who possesses the gift of felicitous expression.

It may not be amiss to point out that Charlot himself belongs to that band of pioneers in the art of mural painting which includes Rivera and Orozco and this reviewer thinks it well to suggest that those who are interested by Charlot's book might also consult another book, "Modern Mexican Art," by Laurence E. Schmeckebier, wherein Charlot's own work is discussed. A knowledge of an author's position in his own field sometimes enables the lay reader to reach a clearer understanding of the author's ideas. "Art from the Mayans to Disney" is a good book; it is full of ideas that are certainly not trite and that should prove beneficial to the reader. An artist can also find in it food for thought and perhaps a much needed stimulus to help in the development of an art that will be indigenous to this continent.

MAURICE LAVANOUX.

RELIGION

Primitive Revelation, by the Reverend Wilhelm Schmidt, S.V.D. Translated by the Reverend Joseph J. Baierl, S.T.D. St. Louis: B. Herder Book Company. $2.75.

THIS WORK originally appeared in 1912 as a contribution to Esser and Mausbach's great apologetic symposium, "Religion Christentum Kirche." The present translation by Dr. Baierl, from the fifth edition of 1923, contains a good deal of supplementary material drawn by the translator from Father Schmidt's publications issued since the latter date.

The study deals with four topics: first, the essence, contents and scope of primitive revelation, treated from the theological and exegetical standpoint; second, the bodily and spiritual capability of the earliest men to receive such revelation, in the light of the evidence from the Bible and from the sciences of prehistoric archaeology and cultural and physical anthropology; third, the data from cultural anthropology in support of the historical actuality of primitive revelation; fourth, the unity of the human race and the decay of primitive revelation, chiefly from the anthropological evidence. A selected bibliography and index are appended.

The book is not an easy one to evaluate. It has so many excellencies, but at the same time contains so much that demands from the reader critical scrutiny and technical anthropological background.

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First of all, it is a highly original and refreshing approach to an ancient apologetic subject that has been given stepmotherly treatment for many decades past. Father Schmidt brings to bear upon it his vast anthropological and linguistic knowledge, his extraordinary powers of scientific association and his penetrating genius as critic and constructor. On page after page and in section after section brilliant flashes light up the dark corners and give vivid significance to seemingly insignificant details of the biblical narrative of man's creation and earliest career. "Primitive revelation," under Father Schmidt's magic, becomes a fascinating topic for the general reader, while his highly original and suggestive interpretations impose upon biblical and theological scholars the urgent obligation of reckoning with them.

The work must, however, be read, the reviewer strongly feels, with critical caution, and with adequate knowledge, not easily picked up, of the extremely delicate and complex technical anthropological issues involved. Father Schmidt is recognized in professional anthropological circles on both sides of the Atlantic as one of greatest living masters of cultural anthropology and primitive linguistics. He has made new contributions of the first order to his chosen disciplines. His achievements are wholeheartedly recognized by his professional confrères of all nationalities and philosophies. He is personally loved and respected everywhere for his genial personality.

But it is equally held by most anthropologists, on purely technical grounds, that a great many of his inferences and broader theories are highly speculative. Especially is this the case regarding his basic theory, the culture-cycle reconstruction, which underlies so much of the work under review. This particular reconstruction has been widely accepted by Catholic theologians and apologists. It is a reconstruction, however, that rests, in the view of the overwhelming majority of cautious, balanced and impartial anthropologists, on very feeble evidence, and that sharply conflicts, they feel, with a vast horde of hard facts. It is for these reasons, and not from any theological or other bias, that they reject both the older cultural evolutionism or unilinearism against which Father Schmidt has so skilfully and successfully tilted, and the newer culture-cycle reconstructions of Graebner and Ankermann and of Schmidt himself. They have tired of playing with houses of cards and are turning to the slow patient sweating labor of building their edifice soberly but solidly, albeit much less ambitiously. For the fairest and most competent appraisal of the whole Kulturkreis movement, the reader may consult R. H. Lowie, "The History of Ethnological Theory."

A good many sections of the present work need to be brought up to date, such as those on the age of the race, the unity of mankind, the relation of human to animal intelligence and so forth. But these are minor points.

To sum up, Father Schmidt's "Primitive Revelation," of which Dr. Baierl has given us such a splendid and useful translation and adaptation, has been for nearly three decades and remains a distinguished contribution to the literature of the problem discussed, but one that needs to be utilized with discriminating judgment and in the light of the complex technical data and assumptions involved. To accept everything therein as the last word in anthropology or as finally established, with no matter what finality expressed and formulated by the author out of his own convictions, can easily do the cause of Catholic theology and science more harm than good. JOHN M. COOPER.

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The Inner Forum

CANON JACQUES LECLERQ has written a moving appeal for Christian internationalism in the Belgian bi-monthly, *La Cité Chrétienne*. After referring to the difficulties of the Oslo Powers and the war outbreak, the Canon continues: "When this war is finished, Europe will be covered with new ruins, and it will only have resulted in the preparation of new hatreds, new wars and new ruins if hearts are not open to the sentiment of international collaboration.

"At the very moment that the guns are beginning to take aim we must set out to recall that our civilization can no longer exist without the collaboration of all. Peoples can no longer live hostilely confronting one another, nor without one another. The material side of civilization requires that they live together and collaborate in every domain. Autarchy is folly and it leads to war.

"Up to now Belgium is neutral. The rôle of neutrals is to mobilize all the moral forces that can build up a new view of things. It is a question not only of stopping or localizing the war that is getting under way, important as that may be and immediately so. But it is primarily a question whether the ordeal this time fail to be of any use or to show men the error of their ways. The League of Nations might have succeeded ten years ago if people had wished, but everyone preferred his immediate interests. . . .

"The rôle of Christians is that of a leaven. Thanks be to God, the Church is not implicated in the present conflict. The conflict is purely political, a struggle between terrestrial ambitions, one wanting to take what belongs to the other, but neither contestant claiming to fight for or against Christ. That obviates many of the difficulties that obscured several recent struggles. Our rôle is clearly that which Our Lord assigns to us: to be a leaven.

"Everywhere to engage in moral activity which tends to make charity dominate, whatever happens! We are children of charity and charity is constructive. Charity must make something of whatever happens and make use of every active means to make its point of view win out even in the midst of battles. . . . The leaven need not be massive: a little leaven is all that is needed to make the dough rise, if only it is active."

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